

VISVA-BHĀRATI
LIBRARY



PRESENTED BY

BROADWAY *TRANSLATIONS*

*“Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.”*

First Edition, 1916

Broadway Translations

MME. DE LA FAYETTE

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Translated by

H. ASHTON

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

With an Introduction

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS LTD

NEW YORK E. P. DUTTON & CO.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

	PAGE
I. THE TIMES	1
II. THE AUTHOR	3
III. THE UNITY OF MADAME DE LA FAYETTE'S WORK	11
IV. THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES	16
V. THE TRANSLATION	23
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE	27

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

FIRST PART	29
SECOND PART	92
THIRD PART	152
FOURTH PART	214
HISTORICAL NOTES	273

INTRODUCTION

I : THE TIMES

IN the year 1678 there was much discussion in Paris about a little book published by Claude Barbin at his shop in the Law Courts. It had appeared in four thin duodecimo volumes, and the four Parts, when bound together, made a book that could be comfortably carried in the pocket.

The lady who wrote it was so afraid she might be accused of being a “professional author” that she caused her novel to appear without name or pseudonym. According to the publisher’s notice, it had been read with approbation before being printed; but the author, knowing that works are sometimes condemned because of the mediocre opinion one has of the writer, “remained in obscurity.”

‘The times have changed, and authors with them.

Madame de La Fayette did not know that this little book alone would save her name from oblivion, and how could she imagine

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

that she was living in the Augustan Age of French literature, and that most of her friends and acquaintances would also be known to fame? The muster-roll of the names of people she saw in childhood, or met almost daily in after-life, is glorious—in government, Louis XIII, Louis XIV, Richelieu, Mazarin, Fouquet, Louvois, Colbert; in military life, Turenne, Vauban, and the great Condé. She knew the lesser lights of literature, Benserade, Segrais, Ménage, Scarron, Mademoiselle de Scudéry, and Voiture, and knew not, perhaps, how much other people she met outshone them—Racine, Bossuet, La Fontaine, Boileau, Perrault, Molière, Madame de Sévigné, La Rochefoucauld. She frequented the famous salon of the Marchioness of Rambouillet, the no less *précieuse* country house at Fresnes; and her parents knew quite well the founders of the French Academy, and bore them no grudge.

Not only was she brought into contact with the great men and women of her time, but she observed them with care, and kept a record of what she saw around her. We have only fragments of her *Memoirs*, but they intensify our regret at the loss of a work that would have been of priceless value to the historian of the period. While the *Memoirs* dare to be critical of Louis XIV, they record matters of history, and the author has the decency not to

INTRODUCTION

caper and smirk between the reader and the events recorded.

II : THE AUTHOR

Marie Madeleine Pioche de La Vergne was born, and spent the greater part of her life, in a suburb of Paris that is now part of the city. Her home was near the Luxembourg Garden, in the Rue Férou, a little street running from the Rue de Vaugirard towards the Church of Saint-Sulpice.

Her parents, Marc Pioche de La Vergne and Elizabeth Péna, were of good family, and found for her as godfather and godmother a Marshal of France—Urbain de Maillé, Marquess of Brézé, and a favourite niece of Richelieu, later known as the Duchess of Aiguillon.

In spite of this auspicious entrance into the world, the child's early years remain obscure. If she wrote anything during her childhood, it was not published with an introduction by a great writer pointing out to a credulous public just how wonderful it was ! Nor would it have any great attraction because its spelling was “quaint.” Mademoiselle de La Vergne indulged in quaint spelling to the end of her days, as did all her contemporaries, and they never knew that this was a sign of genius for people under twelve and of crass ignorance for people above that age. Marie-Madeleine

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

probably spent most of her time in Paris, but she may have accompanied her parents to Pontoise and to Havre. They lived at these places in turn, and there is no record to prove that they did not invite their little daughter to accompany them, or that she declined.

Her father died in 1649, and from 1650 to 1655 Mademoiselle de La Vergne was maid-of-honour to the Queen. Her mother married again (1650), and, by choosing the Chevalier Renaud de Sévigné as second husband, she made possible the life-long friendship between her daughter and the charming Madame de Sévigné—though there were probably other reasons for the choice.

Mademoiselle de La Vergne received a better education than most of her contemporaries, but was not so learned, thank Heaven ! as some of her biographers would have us believe. As a Latin scholar, she would have made a good showing in a matriculation examination, but it appears from her letters that she needed the help of a priest and a dictionary when reading Latin verse. Her Greek never got past the rudiments ; but she read Italian, and was considered a judge of Italian poetry. On the only occasion on which she was put to the test, however, she fell into the trap of preferring an Italian poem by Ménage to poems on a similar subject by Marini and Tasso.

INTRODUCTION

Most of her friends married between the ages of twelve and sixteen, but she reached the advanced age of twenty-two before a husband was found for her. He appeared on the scene in 1655, and was immediately snapped up. He was not brilliant, not by any means a courtier, and was in his fortieth year, but his family tree was big, bushy, and of the soundest wood. A man who can describe himself in a marriage contract as High and Puissant Lord François de La Fayette, Knight, Count of La Fayette, Médat, Gontevantouze and Forests and Dependencies thereof, Baron of Chouvigny, Espinasse, and Nades, Lord of Hauteserre, Hautefeuille and other places, is not to be despised by the twenty-two-year-old daughter of a knight—provided she has not to call him all that every morning at breakfast. She married him, and left no record of what she called him. She said good-bye to her beloved Paris, and went to live with her husband in his old castle at Espinasse in Auvergne. Her health caused some uneasiness ; and she had to return to Paris for the birth of her first child. There were also law-cases to be looked after, and Madame de La Fayette had more friends at Court than her husband. So, while he stayed on his estate, she lived in Paris and transacted his business. He seems to have come to visit her from time to time ; she kept him posted on the news of the Court :

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

but he occupied a very small place in her life.

Two sons were born of the marriage ; the elder she provided with benefices, although he never took full orders. Free from all anxiety, he lived to a ripe old age, and was the last of the La Fayettes.

The other son entered the army, rose to high rank, married the rich Mademoiselle de Marillac, had a daughter who later married the Prince of Tarente, but survived his mother only a year.

His military career would have been much less brilliant had she not continually intervened on his behalf. The French War Office archives contain many letters from Madame de La Fayette to Louvois, dealing with her son's promotion or explaining away his misdemeanours. She found him a wife and a fortune, and proved herself to be an energetic and capable mother.

Mademoiselle de La Vergne's marriage with Monsieur de La Fayette brought her to know and visit in her convent the beautiful and unfortunate Louise Motier de La Fayette, whose romance with Louis XIII was cut short by the machinations of Richelieu. In this convent of Sainte Marie de Chaillot lived Henriette, widow of Charles I of England, and her daughter Henriette-Anne.

The Princess was ten years younger than

INTRODUCTION

Madame de La Fayette; and, when she married the Duke of Orleans, it was natural for her to remember the friend who had visited her in her adversity, and to appoint her one of her ladies-in-waiting. This experience at the Court of Madame was to have far-reaching effects on the literary work of the author of *The History of Madame Henriette*.

Madame de La Fayette was one of those fortunate persons who have a wide circle of acquaintances and a few very faithful friends. Three of the latter call for mention here because they influenced, in various ways, her work as a novelist.

The first of these, Madame de Sévigné, lives in our memory as the affectionate mother of an unworthy daughter, for in proportion as Madame de Sévigné is warm-hearted, self-sacrificing, even fussy in her maternal love, Françoise de Sévigné is cold, selfish, and undemonstrative. The separation of mother and daughter when Françoise became Madame de Grignan gave French literature an unique collection of letters. Not even the knowledge that they would be read to a circle of friends, not even the desire to impress those friends with her literary skill and cleverness, could prevent Madame de Sévigné from betraying her love for her daughter. No one can read the letters without feeling that such a woman would be a friend indeed. Madame de La

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

Fayette saw the mother's weakness, and no love was lost between her and Madame de Grignan ; but she cherished as long as she lived the friendship of Madame de Sévigné.

Madame de Grignan could not agree with her mother when they were together, though she appeared to be on very affectionate terms when they communicated by letter. She helped her spendthrift husband to reduce Madame de Sévigné to poverty, and accepted the sacrifice with very little gratitude.

Charles de Sévigné was a handsome, attractive flirt, an indifferent soldier, though brave in action ; and he proved quite incapable of making his way in the world.

No wonder, then, that Madame de Sévigné was just a little jealous of the success of Madame de La Fayette's two sons ; yet this natural jealousy never estranged them. Many a time the letters for Provence were finished and sealed in Madame de La Fayette's house. In times of stress, Madame de Sévigné knew where to find a sympathetic ear ; and, in her turn, Madame de La Fayette was glad to receive a visit from her cheerful and affectionate friend.

When the Marchioness arrived at the house in the Rue Férou, she frequently found there the Duke of La Rochefoucauld. Knowing what it was to love, to be a devoted slave, and to find little love or gratitude in return, he

INTRODUCTION

was somewhat pessimistic ; and rheumatism had not made him any more pleased with life. He discovered in Madame de La Fayette a sensible, level-headed woman who could be treated as a friend ; and, as long as he could hobble from his neighbouring mansion to her charming house, he found there peace, chosen company, and interesting conversation. The Countess felt his loss keenly when he died in 1680, and she turned then to her oldest and last male friend, Gilles Ménage.

This worthy savant had taught her Latin, directed her reading, and been her humble admirer for longer than either of them cared to remember. She had recourse to him whenever she needed intervention at the law-courts, when she yearned for sympathy in her physical suffering, when, away from Paris, she wanted books or news or a house against her return. Ménage could always be relied upon to accompany her in a visit, to come round and read with her, to see a book through the press, to present a petition to a judge, to find her a litter or a carriage, to do the hundred-and-one things a mere man can do for a fair lady and so justify his existence.

Madame de La Fayette never hesitated to make use of Ménage, or to scold him if he became too gallant, or yet to ask him if he had copied out all the news and sent it to her husband in Auvergne. In the later years, the

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

correspondence between Ménage and his former pupil gives proof of a devoted friendship, and his death was a great blow to the lonely woman who was preparing, with all humility, for her own end.

In spite of indifferent health, Madame de La Fayette was extremely active. Her family affairs, writing, correspondence, court-duties, salon, visits to help her sons in their careers, did not prevent her from serving for many years as secret agent for Madame Royale of Savoy. While her rôle as diplomat has been exaggerated, there is no doubt that she championed her friend at the French Court through all the rather mean quarrels of the Court of Turin. Madame Royale was, perhaps, not always worthy of such intervention; but Madame de La Fayette knew only one way of treating a friend, and that was to give her unswerving loyalty. This she did, cleverly and effectively, at a time when a more selfish woman would have been entirely devoted to her own sufferings and bereavement.

There is no ground for the prevalent opinion that Madame de La Fayette was an invalid, who found life a burden and shirked its responsibilities. A careful study of her unpublished correspondence and other contemporary evidence shows her to have been courageous and cheerful in acute physical suffering, a good and intelligent mother,

INTRODUCTION

a patient and dutiful wife, a faithful, warm-hearted friend, always ready to lend a helping hand, frank and outspoken on occasion though able to keep secrets for others, learned without pedantry, religious without bigotry—in all, eminently sane and well-balanced.

•

III : THE UNITY OF MADAME DE LA FAYETTE'S WORK

With the exception of *Zayde*, a full-length novel which was not the unaided work of Madame de La Fayette and which seems to be a very early attempt at story-telling, all her works deal with one situation—he, she, and the other man.

The reader is justified in inquiring why this is the case in 1678, even if he takes it for granted in the modern novel. The inquiry is interesting, in spite of the fact that it leads to no definite conclusion.

Madame de La Fayette was lady-in-waiting to Henrietta, daughter of Charles I of England and wife of the Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV. She had written, partly from dictation, partly from information given orally by Henrietta, the love-story of Count de Guiche and the unhappily married Princess of England. Guiche was exiled in 1665, and the story ends abruptly with the chronicling of this event. According to Madame de La

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Fayette, the work was undertaken after his departure, so that it is easy to regard *The History of Madame Henrietta of England* as the probable source of a similar study, *The Princess of Clèves*, which appeared in 1678. The temptation is the greater when one remembers that the story of Madame Henrietta was not published during the life-time of its author, and could therefore be drawn upon without compunction for a work of fiction that was to be given to the public. Great as the temptation is, it must be resisted, for the writing of this real life-story after 1665 does not account for the fact that a previous publication by Madame de La Fayette, *The Princess of Montpensier*, appeared in 1662, and dealt with the same situation.

Had she seen the inevitable result of the marriage, and been able, between 1660 and 1662, to write a story that described so accurately the future career of Henrietta? Was the writing, under the guidance of the Princess, of the true story of the affair merely a recapitulation for Madame de La Fayette of what she had foreseen in *The Princess of Montpensier*?

We must leave this possibility for a moment to examine another point.

Madame de Sévigné was the friend and relative of Madame de La Fayette. Her daughter Françoise married in January, 1669,

INTRODUCTION

at the age of twenty-two, Count de Grignan, aged forty and already twice a widower. His brother, Chevalier de Grignan, "handsomer than a hero in a novel, and worthy of being the frontispiece to Volume I", according to Madame de Sévigné, was much attracted by the peerless beauty of his sister-in-law. One day, when she saw him thrown from his horse, she fell fainting to the ground. People talked of this; and, as was their wont in the seventeenth century, they even sang a song about it, entreating old Grignan not to be jealous, for his rival was a Grignan too. The scandal was short, for the young man died two years later, leaving all he possessed to his sister-in-law, who was inconsolable. The gossip naturally grieved Madame de Sévigné, and she had a habit of carrying her troubles to her neighbour, Madame de La Fayette.

The temptation is again great to see, in this experience, the basis of *The Princess of Clèves*, but Madame de Grignan was married in 1669, the Chevalier died in 1672, and *The Princess of Montpensier*, 1662, remains still unexplained.

It has been pointed out by her biographers that Madame de La Fayette herself married in 1655 a man much older than herself. It has been remarked that her marriage was very quickly arranged, and could scarcely be a love-match, that she lived apart from her husband after but a few years of married life, and that

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

the Duke of La Rochefoucauld was a very dear friend of hers.

The separation of Monsieur and Madame de La Fayette was not so complete as has been stated, and the Duke of La Rochefoucauld was a rather decrepit Nemours ; but we are not seeking to prove that Madame de La Fayette lived her novel before writing it. The inquiry concerns the train of thought that fixed the subject so clearly in her mind and made her revert to it so frequently. In an undated letter to Ménage, which we have been able to prove beyond controversy to have been written only a year after her marriage in 1655, Madame de La Fayette refers to the "belle sympathie" that exists between her and La Rochefoucauld. The Duke was in love with Madame de Sablé, but she became very religious, and her General Confession at Port Royal is dated 1662. Other letters of Madame de La Fayette show that between 1655 (the date of her marriage) and 1662 (the date of *The Princess of Montpensier*) her friends teased her about La Rochefoucauld.

It is absurd to say that Madame de La Fayette is the Princess of Clèves ; Monsieur de La Fayette the Prince of Clèves ; La Rochefoucauld the Duke of Nemours ; Madame Renaud de Sévigné Madame de Chartres ; but it is surely permissible to think that the teasing of a married woman about a man who

INTRODUCTION

appears to be attracted by her may have given rise in Madame de La Fayette's mind to the problem she so often treated.

Her own experience seems, then, to have brought the problem to her mind : from 1660 she saw the little drama being played before her eyes at the Court of Madame Henrietta ; in 1662 *The Princess of Montpensier* presented the situation in the form of a short story ; after 1665 it was again carefully studied and written down at the request of Madame Henrietta ; it recurred in the experience of Madame de Sévigné's daughter, and *The Princess of Clèves* gave it final artistic form.

The Countess of Tende, published long after the death of Madame de La Fayette, seems to the writer to be a somewhat clumsy early attempt to deal with the situation in fiction. It has little of Madame de La Fayette's restraint and delicacy of touch, and it is difficult to believe that it was written later than *The Princess of Clèves*.

Madame de La Fayette's writings group themselves naturally round *The History of Madame Henrietta of England*, a story from real life which was to be told again as an historical novel by taking a setting from the historians of the sixteenth century and adding the great dramatic scene of the Confession.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

IV : THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Whatever the experience that turned the thoughts of Madame de La Fayette towards the problem treated in her works, she did not neglect to provide herself with historical material for the setting. When writing to Lescheraine, she described *The Princess of Clèves* as memoirs rather than a novel. It has been pointed out by critics that she actually portrayed, not the Court of Henry II, but the highly polished society of Louis XIV. This is merely stating that it is not the Court of Henry II as we have reconstructed it, but that Court as Madame de La Fayette knew it from the conversation of her elders and from her reading. If she toned down the crudities of Brantôme, it was not because she was describing the Court around her, but simply because she was a woman, and a woman of taste. The result may not be as accurate as a picture of the sixteenth century, but it is quite in harmony with the accepted opinion of the "good old days" that still persisted in Madame de La Fayette's time. She was trying faithfully to produce an historical narrative, and she was the more faithful because, in her own house, Segrais often discussed the question of the True and the Probable in fiction, and insisted upon the necessity of going to French history,

INTRODUCTION

and to a period not too far remote, for the material of short stories.

It is for this reason that no attempt will be made here to contrast the one-volume *Princess of Clèves* with the ten-volume novels that immediately preceded it. Madame de La Fayette was not engaged in shortening the interminable novel of her time, but in lengthening the short story—observing all the new rules laid down in recent discussions in her own circle, and exemplified by her protégé Segrais in *Les Nouvelles françaises ou les divertissements de la Princesse Aurélie*.

Professors Rudler and Chamard have shown that she read thoroughly historical works by Pierre Matthieu, Mézeray, Anselme, Godefroy, Nicolas Sanders, André du Chesne, and Francis Godwin.

The characters of the novel are historical, with the exception of the Princess of Clèves herself, and an effort has recently been made to identify her with Anne d'Este. This princess was born at Ferrara, the daughter of Hercule d'Este and of Renée de France, daughter of Louis XII. She married François de Guise, met the Duke of Nemours, and fell in love with him. Her husband died ; and she refused, at first, to marry Nemours, but did so finally.

In spite of the care taken by Madame de La

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

Fayette to make *The Princess of Clèves* as true as possible, the chief interest of the story is not historical but psychological.

The core of the book is the wife's confession to her husband. It has been suggested that this was borrowed at the last moment from a novel by Madame de Villedieu, entitled *Les Désordres de l'amour*. It cannot be denied that this book appeared before *The Princess of Clèves*, but, unfortunately, we do not know how long before. Madame de Villedieu worked rapidly; the printer of *The Princess of Clèves* admits that the manuscript had been circulated and read before going to press: it may have been seen by the author of *Les Désordres de l'amour*, who hastened to incorporate the confession into her forthcoming novel.

Be this as it may, one thing is certain—the confession was not inserted in *The Princess of Clèves* at the last moment. It is prepared for subtly and persistently from the moment of the first appearance of Nemours, and it cannot be removed without the whole story falling to pieces. There is only one interest in the tale, and that is in what happened between the husband, the wife, and the lover. The historical background is as interesting as good scenery and good properties at a play, but it plays no more important rôle; and, while the psychological interest never for one moment

INTRODUCTION

flags, there are historical descriptions that the reader sometimes feels might be curtailed. Such descriptions have generally been taken from Brantôme, and have been drastically shortened by the borrower. They were probably of absorbing interest in the days of Louis XIV, and they cannot be said to retard the action unduly.

We turn with unalloyed pleasure to a consideration of the psychology of the book. Some coincidences, a little awkwardness of construction, pass unnoticed as we revel in this delicate yet profound study of the human heart.

We do not like Nemours, in spite of his comeliness, his politeness, and his ardent passion. He is rather too pleased with his successes with the ladies ; he is alarmingly indiscreet ; and, when he tries to throw on the husband the blame of telling about the confession, he acts like a cad. The task of the author was to make him not so admirable that he would be the unhappy hero of the story, yet handsome enough to be attractive, delicate enough to be esteemed, faithful enough to be dangerous. In this Madame de La Fayette succeeded admirably.

Monsieur de Clèves is vastly superior to his rival ; and it is refreshing to find, in a story of this kind, a husband worthy of our esteem. He loves his wife before and after the

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

marriage—even after the confession. He is a perfect gentleman, and at once enlists our sympathy. His conduct after the confession is so noble that we should begin to judge him more than human, did he not give way to jealousy, bungle his unjustifiable investigation into his wife's conduct, and pay the penalty by his untimely death. Die he must, to permit the development of the story and the complete unfolding of the character of his wife.

Madame de Chartres is an interesting mother, with ideas on the education of girls that were surely in advance of her time. She was responsible for her daughter's unhappiness ; but she acted strictly in accordance with the duty of mothers as understood in her day when she married her daughter to a worthy man, without pausing on discovering that there was no love in the heart of the bride.

But, of course, our preference goes to the young girl who is so vaguely portrayed physically, so minutely analysed and described as a moral being.

She is young—from sixteen to eighteen years of age ; beautiful, graceful, well-dressed, and blonde. Tall ? Slender ? Blue-eyed ? We are vouchsafed no detail except the colour of her hair. She is intelligent, and she has a heart. Critics have babbled about her platonic love. They ought not to have been led astray by her coldness, by her habit of finding some

INTRODUCTION

things above her comprehension. The proud and haughty lady who never forgets what people may say about her conduct is passionate, and she loves deeply and as violently as her more outspoken sisters of the Romantic School.

When she finally refuses to marry Nemours, she does so for two reasons. The first is that he is indirectly responsible for the death of her husband. True, this is not known to the public, and, as they are both free, there would be no scandal if they married. Her pride is, therefore, not likely to be wounded. The second reason is that she is not sure that a flirt of Monsieur de Nemours' type could make a good husband. The removal of difficulties might destroy her charm, and after marriage he might find the pursuit of some one else's wife more to his taste. The passionate woman is uneasy, the passionate woman fears to take any such risk; and therefore she refuses to marry him.

The reader will note with what deft touches the awakening love of Madame de Clèves is indicated, how it is followed step by step, how inevitable the confession seems before it is made. Doubt, certitude, interest, love, remorse, jealousy, pride, humility—every shade of feeling is noted, and the whole situation handled with such delicacy that one has to read slowly and carefully to appreciate the author's wonderful skill.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

The paucity of vocabulary, the lack of metaphor or simile, the persistent understatement, the entire absence of exaggeration or of heroics are, at first reading, somewhat disconcerting. Later, one discovers that this sober, careful style, eloquent by its very sobriety, enhances rather than detracts from the very deep feelings of the characters.

The Princess of Clèves gains on second reading, and every subsequent reading brings to light beauties previously missed. No one but a woman could have written it, and no woman could have done the work better than she who, in her day, was said to be eminently sincere.

The success of the book was immediate, and its influence far-reaching. The old rambling novel was a thing of the past. Truth, or rather probability, was the order of the day ; and most of the women authors who imitated—and they were many—offered their novels to the public under the title of *Memoirs of Count . . .* or *Memoirs of Lady . . .*

Probability and the close study of human motives and emotions had come to the French novel—and they had come to stay.

The French still read and admire *The Princess of Clèves*. If thorough understanding of human nature, restrained and harmonious expression, truth, sympathy, sincerity, and the skilful telling of a pitiful tale—without heroics, without hysterics, without wallowing among

INTRODUCTION

sordid details, still appeal to Anglo-Saxon readers, then this novel will find a permanent place in many a library outside France. 'George Eliot', the Brontës, Jane Austen, will make room for their French sister, and will have no cause to blush, though they may in some cases be constrained to lower their voices in the presence of a woman who sometimes said more by noting a glance and a silence than 'George Sand' could say in an adjective-bespattered page.

Women know how great is this power, and they, at least, will read *The Princess of Clèves*, and say: "Madame de La Fayette wrote from the fullness of her heart; and the things she saw, we see; the things she knew, we know; and the things she felt, we have felt also."

V : THE TRANSLATION

It would be an easy matter to present in English a fairly close translation of *The Princess of Clèves* that would be very readable. It would not give, however, any idea of the style and careful workmanship of Madame de La Fayette. The translator has attempted to put accuracy first; to endeavour, as far as possible, to reproduce the style; and to make the result read like English. This raised many problems.

In the first place, Madame de La Fayette

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

has a very small vocabulary, and she does not hesitate to repeat the same word and the same construction many times in a page. The verbs *donner* and *faire* are terribly overworked, and it was impossible, of course, to show repetitions of this kind. As a rule, repetitions in the English will be found in the French, but the English vocabulary is richer than the original, for otherwise the translation would not have been readable.

Madame de La Fayette is very fond of short sentences, and her longer paragraphs are frequently merely short sentences joined together by *qui* and *que*, as separate railway-coaches are connected by couplings. The temptation is great to join together isolated sentences, and to cut the longer paragraphs. This has rarely been done. Similarly, many sentences could have been translated with ease if a word or so—seemingly of no importance—had been omitted. It was not for us, however, to correct and improve (?) the work, but to translate it.

Many words used by Madame de La Fayette have changed their meaning since the seventeenth century. The greatest difficulty, in this connection, comes from words referring to love. Many such have taken senses in modern French that would be particularly out of place in a novel as delicate in thought and expression as *The Princess of Clèves*.

INTRODUCTION

There are three or four places in the translation where it has been impossible to avoid the word 'Mistress.' It should be remembered that, unless the context establishes beyond doubt the derogatory sense, it means merely 'the woman loved for her own sake.' If it is sometimes contrasted with 'wife', that is because, in the sixteenth century and later in France, love was not sufficient excuse for marriage, and a match between people of equal rank and fortune was considered good even when love was not present. This is so true that, in one scene of the novel, Monsieur de Clèves tells his wife that she is not aware of the violence of his love for her. He had hidden it because, if he acted otherwise, he feared she would consider his conduct unworthy of a husband.

This version has been made from the first French edition, and without omissions.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The reader who desires to study further *The Princess of Clèves* and the problems which could only be touched upon in an introduction to the novel is advised to consult the following recent works :

BIOGRAPHY AND WORKS :

Ashton (H.), *Madame de La Fayette, Sa vie et ses Œuvres*. (Cambridge University Press, 1922.) 1 vol. 8°.

Beaunier (André), *La Jeunesse de Madame de La Fayette*. (Paris : Flammarion.) 1 vol. s.d. (1921).

HISTORICAL BASIS :

Chamard (H.) et Rudler (G.), *Les sources historiques de la Princesse de Clèves*.

Four articles in the *Revue du 16^e Siècle*. (Paris : Champion.)

1st article, Vol. II (1914), pp. 92-131.

2nd article, same volume, pp. 289-321.

3rd article, Vol. V (1907-1918), pp. 1-20.

4th article, same volume, pp. 231-43.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Poizat (Valentine), *La véritable Princesse de Clèves*. (Paris: La Renaissance du Livre.) s.d. (1920).

Bordeaux (Henry), *Les amants d'Annecy: Anne d'Este et Jacques de Nemours*. (Paris, 1921.)

Duclaux (Mary), *Madame de Sévigné*. (Paris, 1914.)

The chapter on Madame de Grignan.

THE FRENCH TEXT :

1. *Œuvres de Madame de La Fayette: La Princesse de Clèves*. (Paris: Lemerre, 1909.) This little edition reproduces the spelling of the First Edition, of which it gives the title page—Notice of Printer to Reader—License to Print.

2. *La Princesse de Clèves*, with an Introduction and Notes. French text; modernized spelling. (Cambridge University Press.)

There are, of course, scores of editions of the *Princesse de Clèves*. The above are quoted as easily obtainable.

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

FIRST PART

SPLENDOUR and gallantry have never appeared in France with such brilliance as during the last years of the reign of Henri II. This Prince was urbane, comely, and amorous ; although his passion for Diana of Poitiers, Duchess of Valentinois, was more than twenty years old, it had not diminished in strength and gave no less striking evidences of its sway.

As he was an adept in all bodily exercises, he devoted most of his time to them. Not a day passed without hunting, tennis, ballets, tilting at the ring, or similar amusements. The colqurs and the emblem of Mme de Valentinois were seen everywhere, and she herself appeared dressed like Mlle de La Marck, her grand-daughter, who was then of marriageable age.

The Queen's presence justified hers. Her

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Majesty was beautiful, though she was past her first youth ; she was fond of magnificence, splendour, and amusement. The King had married her when he was still Duke of Orléans and had an elder brother, the Dauphin, who later died at Tournon—a Prince whose birth and great qualities destined him worthily to take the place of his father, King Francis I.

The Queen's ambitious character made ruling a pleasure to her. It appeared as though she submitted without suffering to the King's love for the Duchess of Valentinois, and she showed no jealousy ; but her dissimulation was so great that it was hard to judge her feelings, and policy obliged her to have personal relations with the Duchess so that she might have such relations with the King. This Prince liked the company of women, even of those with whom he was not in love. He stayed every day in the Queen's apartment during her reception, when the fairest and most comely of both sexes were sure to assemble.

Never had a Court so many fair women and right comely men : and it seemed as if Nature had taken pleasure in giving her largesse of beauty to the greatest of the princes and princesses. Mme Elizabeth of France, who later became Queen of Spain, was beginning to show signs of a superior mind and of the incomparable beauty that has been her undoing. Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, who

FIRST PART

had recently married the Dauphin and was called the Queen Dauphiness, was a person perfect in mind and body. She had been brought up at the French Court, had acquired all its polish, and had been born with such a capacity for the arts that, in spite of her extreme youth, she loved them and understood them better than anyone else. The Queen, her mother-in-law, and Madame, the King's sister, were also fond of poetry, drama, and music. The taste that King Francis I had for poetry and for letters still continued in France ; and as the King, his son, loved bodily exercises, all the pleasures were to be found at Court. But what gave this Court distinction and stateliness was the infinite number of princes and nobles of exceeding great merit. Those whom I am about to name were, in divers ways, the ornament and admiration of their day.

The King of Navarre earned the respect of all by the splendour of his rank and bearing. He excelled in war, and the Duke of Guise so stirred his emulation that he had often left his place as General to fight alongside him as a private soldier in most perilous places. It must be admitted that the Duke had given proofs of such admirable valour, and had achieved such complete success, that there was no gallant soldier who could do other than look upon him with envy. His valour was accom-

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

panied by all the other great qualities: he had a vast and profound intelligence, a noble and lofty mind, and an equal capacity for war and for affairs of State.

His brother, Cardinal de Lorraine, had naturally an insatiable ambition, a quick mind, and admirable eloquence. He had acquired deep learning and, to enhance his reputation, he used it in defence of the Catholic faith, which was beginning to be attacked.

The Chevalier de Guise, later known as the Grand Prior, was a prince beloved by all, comely, highly intelligent, clever; and his valour was renowned throughout Europe.

The Prince of Condé, in a small body little favoured by Nature, had a great and haughty spirit and a wit that gained him favour in the eyes of even the fairest of women.

The Duke of Nevers, who had won fame in war and by reason of the important posts he had held, was, although somewhat aged, the delight of the Court. He had three sons, who were exceptionally comely. The second, known as the Prince of Clèves, was worthy to uphold the reputation of his name: he was brave and fond of display, and he had prudence that does not generally go with youth.

The Vidame de Chartres, a scion of the ancient house of Vendôme, whose name princes of the blood have not disdained to bear, was equally distinguished in war and in love: he

FIRST PART

was handsome, attractive, valiant, bold, liberal —all these good qualities were vivid and striking: in short, he alone was worthy of being compared with the Duke of Nemours, if anyone could be comparable. For this Prince was Nature's masterpiece, the least of his qualities being that he was the comeliest and handsomest man in the world. What raised him above others was an incomparable valour and an attractiveness of mind, face, and carriage that has never been seen except in him. He had a gaiety that pleased men and women equally, an extraordinary skill in all sports, a way of dressing that was always imitated by every one without being equalled, and, in short, a general bearing that ensured that, wherever he appeared, people could look at no one else. There was not a lady at Court whose pride would not have been gratified by his attentions to her. Few of those to whom he had paid attentions could boast of having resisted him, and several even to whom he had not made love had nevertheless fallen in love with him. He was so affable and so inclined to dalliance that he could not refuse some attentions to those who tried to please him; so he had several affairs, but it was hard to guess which lady he really loved. He frequently went to the Dauphiness'; her beauty, her affability, the care she took to attract every one, and the particular esteem she had

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

shown for this Prince, had often given reason to believe that he aspired to her. The Guises, whose niece she was, had greatly increased their power and reputation by her marriage : their ambition made them seek to rank with princes of the blood and to share the power of the Connétable de Montmorency. The King relied upon him for the greater part of the affairs of State, and treated the Duke of Guise and Marshal de Saint-André as his favourites. But those who were brought into contact with him by his favour or by affairs of State could not maintain their position except by submitting to the Duchess of Valentinois, and, although she retained neither youth nor beauty, she controlled the King with such absolute power that it may be said she was mistress of his person and of the State.

The King had always loved the Connétable ; and, as soon as he began to reign, he had recalled him from the exile into which Francis I had sent him. The Court was divided between the Guises and the Connétable, who was supported by the princes of the blood. Both parties had always thought of winning over the Duchess of Valentinois. The Duke of Aumale, brother of the Duke of Guise, had married one of her daughters. The Connétable aspired to a similar alliance. He was not satisfied with having married his eldest son to Diana, daughter of the King and of a lady from Piedmont, who

FIRST PART

took the veil as soon as she had given birth to the child. There had been many obstacles to this marriage because of the promises made by Montmorency to Mademoiselle de Piennes, one of the Queen's maids-of-honour, and, although the King had overcome them with extreme patience and kindness, the Connétable did not consider himself sufficiently supported unless he could make sure of the Duchess of Valentinois and unless he separated her from the Guises, whose power was beginning to cause the Duchess uneasiness. She had delayed as long as she could the Dauphin's marriage to the Queen of Scotland. The beauty, the capable and highly developed mind of this young Queen, and the standing that the marriage gave to the Guises, were unbearable to her. She had a special aversion to Cardinal de Lorraine—he had spoken to her sharply and even scornfully ; she saw that he allied himself with the Queen ; hence the Connétable found her disposed to take him as an ally and to bind him to her by the marriage of Mademoiselle de La Marck, her grand-daughter, to Monsieur d'Anville, his second son, who later, in the reign of Charles IX, succeeded to his post.

The Connétable did not think he would find any opposition to marriage in Monsieur d'Anville's mind as he had in that of M. de Montmorency ; but the opposition was

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

scarcely less, although he did not know the reason. Monsieur d'Anville was madly in love with the Dauphiness, and, hopeless as this passion was, he could not bring himself to enter upon an engagement that would require him to divide his attentions.

Marshal de Saint-André was the only person at Court who was not on one side or the other : he was one of the favourites, and his advantage he owed to his character alone. The King had been fond of him since the time when he was Dauphin, and later had made him Marshal of France at an age when one does not usually expect the smallest honour. The favour that he enjoyed gave him a reputation that he maintained by his merits and by his personal charm, by great refinement at his table and in furnishing his home, and by the greatest magnificence ever seen in a private person.

The King's liberality contributed to this expenditure. His Majesty was generous to prodigality with those he liked. He had not all the qualities of greatness, but he had several of them, and above all he was fond of war and understood it ; hence great success had been his, and, except for the battle of Saint-Quentin, his reign had been nothing but a succession of victories. He had won in person the battle of Renty, Piedmont had been conquered, the English driven from France, and the Emperor

FIRST PART

Charles V had seen the end of his good fortune before the city of Metz, which he had unsuccessfully besieged with all the forces of the Empire and of Spain. Nevertheless, as the misfortune of Saint-Quentin had diminished the hope of our conquests, and as fortune had since appeared evenly balanced between the two Kings, they gradually became inclined towards peace.

The Dowager Duchess of Lorraine had begun the proposals at the time of the Dauphin's marriage, and secret negotiations had continued ever since then. Finally, Cercamp in Artois was chosen as the place for a meeting. Cardinal de Lorraine, the Connétable de Montmorency, and Marshal de Saint-André were there to represent the King; the Duke of Alva and the Prince of Orange represented Philip II; and the Duke and Duchess of Lorraine were the mediators. The chief issues were the marriage of Madame Elizabeth of France to Don Carlos, Infanta of Spain, and that of Madame, the King's sister, to the Duke of Savoy.

The King, however, remained on the frontier, and he there learned of the death of Mary, Queen of England. He sent Count de Randan to Elizabeth to congratulate her on her accession to the throne. She received him gladly, for her claims were so ill-established that it was an advantage to her to be recognized by the King. The Count found her informed of

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

the interests of the Court of France and of the merits of those who composed it, but, above all, he found her so full of the reputation of the Duke of Nemours—she spoke to him so many times about this Prince, and with such eagerness, that, when Monsieur de Randan returned and was giving the King an account of his journey, he told him there was nothing that Monsieur de Nemours could not aspire to as regards this Princess, and that he had no doubt she would even consent to a marriage. The King spoke of the matter to the Duke that very evening ; he had Monsieur de Randan relate to him all his conversations with Elizabeth, and advised Monsieur de Nemours to try for this great prize.

Monsieur de Nemours at first thought that the King was not speaking seriously ; but, when he saw his mistake, he said :

“ At least, Sire, if I embark on a vain quest, on the advice and for the service of Your Majesty, I beg Your Majesty to keep it secret until the result justifies me in public opinion, and to deign not to make me appear so puffed up with vanity as to claim that a Queen who has never seen me wishes to marry me for loye.”

The King promised him to mention this plan to no one but the Connétable, and, in fact, he was of the opinion that success depended on secrecy.

Monsieur de Randan advised Monsieur de

FIRST PART

Nemours to go to England on the simple pretext of travel, but the Prince could not bring himself to do so. He sent Lignerolles, his favourite, who was a clever young man, to find out the state of the Queen's feelings and to try to establish relations. While awaiting the result of this journey, he went to see the Duke of Savoy, who was then at Brussels with the King of Spain.

The death of Mary of England raised great obstacles in the way of concluding peace. The Conference broke up at the end of November, and the King returned to Paris.

At that very time there appeared at Court a beauty who attracted every one's attention ; and it is obvious that her beauty must have been perfect, since it caused wonder in a place where people were so used to seeing beautiful women. She was of the same family as the Vidame de Chartres, and one of the richest heiresses in France. Her father had died young and left her in the care of his widow, Madame de Chartres, whose wealth, virtue, and merit were exceedingly great. After the loss of her husband, she had passed several years without returning to Court. During this absence, she had devoted herself to the education of her daughter. Now she did not strive merely to cultivate her child's intelligence and beauty ; she gave thought also to inculcating virtue and to making it attractive. Most mothers think

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

that to keep young people away from love-making it is enough never to speak of it in their presence. Madame de Chartres held an opposite opinion ; she often pictured love to her daughter ; she showed her what was agreeable in it, the better to persuade her of its dangers, which she taught her ; she told her of men's insincerity, their deceit and their faithlessness, of the domestic catastrophes caused by illicit love-affairs ; and she pointed out to her, on the other hand, the calm that reigned in the existence of a faithful wife, and how virtue gives distinction and dignity to one who has rank and beauty ; but she showed her also how hard it is to maintain this virtue, save by a certain mistrust of oneself and by constant effort to hold to that which alone can bring happiness to a woman—that is, to love her husband and to be loved by him.

This heiress was at the time one of the most eligible ladies in France ; and, although she was extremely young, several marriages had been proposed. Madame de Chartres, who was very proud, found almost nothing worthy of her daughter. When she was in her sixteenth year, her mother decided, to take her to Court. The Vidame went to meet her on her arrival. He was surprised by the great beauty of Mademoiselle de Chartres, and he had reason to be so ; the fairness of her complexion and her golden hair gave her a beauty

FIRST PART

more dazzling than was ever seen in another ; all her features were regular, and her face and her person were full of grace and charm.

The day after her arrival, she went to match some precious stones at the house of an Italian who had world-wide dealings in gems. This man had come from Florence with the Queen, and had become so rich in trade that his house was more like a great noble's than a merchant's. While she was there, the Prince of Clèves arrived ; he was taken so unawares by her beauty that he could not conceal his surprise, and Mademoiselle de Chartres could not refrain from blushing when she saw how astonished he was at the sight of her. She recovered herself, however, without paying more attention to the Prince's conduct than politeness required towards a man of his apparent rank. Monsieur de Clèves looked at her with admiration, and could not understand—for he had not seen her at Court—who this beautiful person could be. He saw clearly by her bearing and by her attendants that she must be of high rank. Her youth led him to believe that she was unmarried ; but, not seeing her mother with her, and as the Italian, who did not know her, addressed her as Madame, he knew not what to think, and he continued to look at her in astonishment. He noticed that his attention embarrassed her—contrary to the usual way of young women,

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

who always note with pleasure the effects of their beauty ; it even seemed to him that he was the cause of her impatience to go, and indeed she went away almost immediately. Monsieur de Clèves consoled himself for losing sight of her with the hope of finding out who she was ; but he was quite surprised to learn that she was not known. He was so impressed by her beauty and by the modesty he had noted in her bearing that from this very moment, so it may be said, he conceived for her an extraordinary esteem and love. That evening he paid his court to Madame, the King's sister. This Princess was held in high esteem because of her favour with her brother the King, and this favour was so great that the King, when making the peace, agreed to give up Piedmont in order that she might marry the Duke of Savoy. Although she had always wanted to marry, she had never wished to marry anyone but a sovereign, and for this reason she had refused the King of Navarre when he was Duke of Vendôme, and she had always wanted to marry the Duke of Savoy : her affection for him dated from the time when she saw him at Nice during the interview between Francis I and Pope Paul III. As she was very cultured and had good taste in the arts, she attracted all persons of refinement, and at certain hours the entire Court was in her apartment.

FIRST PART

And hither came Monsieur de Clèves, as was his wont. He was so full of the intelligence and beauty of Mademoiselle de Chartres that he could speak of nothing else. He related the incident openly, and was untiring in his praise of the girl whom he had seen and did not know. Madame told him there was no such girl as the one he described, and that, were there such a one, she would be known to everybody. Hearing her conversation, Madame de Dampierre, who was her maid-of-honour and a friend of Madame de Chartres, approached the Princess, and whispered to her that it was doubtless Mademoiselle de Chartres whom Monsieur de Clèves had seen. Madame turned to him and said that, if he would come on the morrow, she would let him see this beauty who had so impressed him.

Mademoiselle de Chartres, indeed, appeared the next day : she was received by the Queens with all the good grace imaginable, and with such admiration from every one that she heard around her nothing but praise. She received it with such noble modesty that she appeared not to hear it, or at least not to be affected by it. Thence she went to see Madame, the King's sister. The Princess, after praising her beauty, told her of the astonishment she had caused Monsieur de Clèves. The Prince came in a moment later.

“Come”, she said to him, “see whether

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

I have kept my word, and whether I am not showing you in Mademoiselle de Chartres the beauty whom you seek. At least thank me for having told her of the admiration you already have for her."

Monsieur de Clèves rejoiced to see that the girl he had found so attractive was of a rank in keeping with her beauty. He approached her, and begged her to remember that he had been the first to admire her, and that, without knowing who she was, he had had for her all the feelings of respect and esteem that were her due.

The Chevalier de Guise and he—being friends—left Madame's together. They began by praising Mademoiselle de Chartres unreservedly. At last they realized that they were praising her too much, and they both stopped saying what they thought of her. But they had to speak of her wherever they met in the days that followed. The new beauty was long the subject of every conversation. The Queen praised her very much, and conceived an extraordinary regard for her. The Dauphiness made a favourite of her, and asked Madame de Chartres to bring her often. Mesdames, the King's daughters, sent for her to share their amusements. In short, she was beloved and admired by the whole Court—with the exception of the Duchess of Valentinois. It was not that the new beauty awakened her

FIRST PART

jealousy—too long experience had taught her that she had nothing to fear as far as the King was concerned ; but her hatred for the Vidame de Chartres, of whom she had wished to make an ally by marriage with one of her daughters, and who had gone over to the Queen, was such that she could not look with favour upon any one who bore his name and for whom he showed great friendship.

The Prince of Clèves fell passionately in love with Mademoiselle de Chartres, and ardently desired to marry her ; but he feared that the pride of Madame de Chartres would be wounded at the thought of giving her daughter to a man who was not the eldest of his family. Yet, so great was this family—and moreover Count d'Eu, the eldest son, had just married a person so close to the royal family—that it was the timidity arising from love rather than any sound reason, that caused Monsieur de Clèves' fear. He had many rivals. The Chevalier de Guise appeared to him the most formidable on account of his birth, his merit, and the reputation that royal favour gave his family. The Chevalier had fallen in love with Mademoiselle de Chartres the day he first saw her ; he noticed M. de Clèves' passion, as Monsieur de Cleves had noticed his. Although they were friends, the estrangement that arises from love for the same person had prevented frankness between them, and their

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

friendship had cooled without their having had the courage to talk over the matter. The fortune that had befallen Monsieur de Clèves of being the first to see Mademoiselle de Chartres, appeared to him a happy omen, and seemed to give him some advantage over his rivals; but he foresaw that great obstacles would be put in the way by the Duke of Nevers, his father. The Duke had close ties with the Duchess of Valentinois; she was the Vidame's enemy, and this was enough to prevent the Duke of Nevers from allowing his son to think of the Vidame's niece.

Madame de Chartres, who had taken such pains to inspire virtue in her daughter, did not abandon her efforts in a place where they were so necessary and where there were so many dangerous examples. Ambition and love-making were the soul of this Court, and obsessed the minds of men and women alike. There were so many different cliques and interests, and women played such a part in them, that love was always mixed with interest, and interest with love. People were never calm or indifferent: they thought of improving their station, of being agreeable, of rendering service or injury; they knew neither boredom nor idleness, and were always busy with pleasure or intrigues. The women formed special attachments for the Queen, for the Dauphiness, for the Queen of Navarre, for

FIRST PART

Madame the King's sister, or for the Duchess of Valentinois according as inclination, reasons of propriety, or similarity of disposition gave rise to such attachments. Those who were no longer in their first youth, and who professed an austere virtue, were attached to the Queen. The younger ones in search of pleasure and dalliance paid court to the Dauphiness. The Queen of Navarre had her favourites ; she was young and had some influence over her husband, the King ; he was attached to the Connétable, and hence had much credit. Madame, the King's sister, still possessed some of her beauty, and attracted several ladies to her. The Duchess of Valentinois retained all those she deigned to look upon ; but few ladies pleased her ; and, except a few who enjoyed her familiar acquaintance and her confidence and whose disposition accorded with hers, she received none except on such days as it took her fancy to hold a Court like the Queen's.

All these different cliques emulated and envied each other. The ladies who composed them had also rivalries amongst themselves, competing either for favour or for lovers ; the interests of social standing and advancement were frequently joined to these other interests, less important but not less sought after. So there was a kind of agitation without disorder in this Court that made it very

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

agreeable but also very dangerous for a girl. Madame de Chartres saw the peril, and thought only of the means to protect her daughter against it. She asked her, not as a mother but as a friend, to confide in her all the gallant sayings that were addressed to her, and she promised to help her to guide herself in matters that are often embarrassing when one is young.

The Chevalier de Guise showed so clearly his feelings and his intentions concerning Mademoiselle de Chartres that no one remained in ignorance of them. He saw, however, nothing but the impossibility of what he desired: he knew full well that he was not a suitor fit for Mademoiselle de Chartres because of the smallness of the fortune with which he had to maintain his social position, and he well knew also that his brothers would not approve of his marrying, as they feared the loss of prestige that the marriage of younger sons generally causes in great families. Cardinal de Lorraine soon made it clear to him that he was not mistaken; he condemned with extraordinary fervour the attachment shown for Mademoiselle de Chartres, but he did not give the real reasons. The Cardinal had for the Vidame a hatred which was then secret, but which came out later. He would have consented more readily to seeing his brother make an alliance with anyone except the Vidame, and he declared so publicly how opposed he was

FIRST PART

to the marriage that he seriously offended Madame de Chartres. She took great pains to show that Cardinal de Lorraine had nothing to fear, and that she had no thought of this match.

The Vidame acted as she did, and felt Cardinal de Lorraine's conduct still more keenly than Madame de Chartres, because he was more aware of its cause.

The Prince of Clèves had not given less public evidence of his passion than had the Chevalier de Guise. The Duke of Nevers had heard of this attachment with concern ; he thought, however, that he had only to speak to his son to make him change his conduct ; but he was quite surprised to find in him the definite intention of marrying Mademoiselle de Chartres. He disapproved of this intention ; he was angry ; and hid his anger so little that the reason for it was spread abroad at Court and reached the ears even of Madame de Chartres. She had never supposed that Monsieur de Nevers would regard marriage with her daughter as anything but an honour for his son ; she was much surprised that the families of Clèves and Guise feared an alliance with her, instead of seeking it. The annoyance she felt made her think of finding a match for her daughter that would raise her above those who thought themselves above her. After examining all possibilities, she chose the Prince

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Dauphin, son of the Duke of Montpensier. He was at that time of marriageable age, and was the highest in rank of the eligible men at Court. As Madame de Chartres was very intelligent, was helped by the Vidame, who was high in favour, and also, as her daughter was an excellent match, she worked with so much skill and success that Monsieur de Montpensier seemed to desire this marriage, and it appeared as though no difficulties would stand in its way.

Nevertheless, the Vidame, who knew of the attachment of Monsieur d'Anville to the Dauphiness, was of the opinion that it would be well to use the power this Princess had over him to enlist him in the service of Mademoiselle de Chartres so that he would obtain the consent of the King and of the Prince of Montpensier, whose intimate friend he was. He spoke of the matter to the Dauphiness, and she espoused with joy a cause that made for the advancement of a person whom she dearly loved: she expressed her joy to the Vidame, and assured him that, although she well knew that she was doing something contrary to the wishes of Cardinal de Lorraine, her uncle, she would joyfully disregard this consideration, because she had reason to complain of him, and because he daily espoused the interests of the Queen in opposition to her own.

FIRST PART

Ladies given to gallantry are always very glad of a pretext to speak to those in love with them. As soon as the Vidame had left the Dauphiness, she ordered Chastelart, who was Monsieur d'Anville's favourite, and who knew of his protector's love for her, to tell him she wished him to be at the Queen's reception that evening. Chastelart undertook the errand with much joy and respect. This gentleman was of a good Dauphiné family, but his merit and his intelligence raised him above his rank. He was received and well treated by all the great lords at Court, and the favour of the Montmorency family had particularly attached him to Monsieur d'Anville. He was comely, expert in all bodily exercises ; he sang pleasantly, wrote verses, and had an urbane and amorous disposition that so pleased Monsieur d'Anville that he made Chastelart a confidant of the love he bore the Dauphiness. This confidence brought him near to the Princess, and it was by seeing her frequently that he awakened the unfortunate passion that bereft him of his reason and at length cost him his life.

Monsieur d'Anville did not fail to go that evening to the Queen's reception ; he considered himself happy to have been chosen by the Dauphiness to try to do something she desired, and he promised to obey her orders to the letter. But Madame de Valentinois,

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

having been informed of the proposed marriage, had thwarted it so carefully and had so prejudiced the King that, when Monsieur d'Anville spoke to him about it, His Majesty showed clearly that he did not approve of it, and even charged him to express his disapproval to the Prince of Montpensier. One can judge of the feelings of Madame de Chartres at the breaking off of a match which she had so ardently desired, and the failure of which gave such an advantage to her enemies and so harmed her daughter.

The Dauphiness expressed to Mademoiselle de Chartres with great friendliness the sorrow she felt at having been of so little use.

“ You see ”, said she, “ that I have but little power ; I am so hated by the Queen and the Duchess of Valentinois that it is difficult for them not to thwart always, either directly or by the aid of those who depend upon them, everything I desire. Yet ”, she added, “ I have had no thought but to please them ; and they hate me only because of the Queen, my mother, who once caused them uneasiness and jealousy. The King had been in love with her before he loved Madame de Valentinois, and during the early years of his married life before he had any children, although he loved the Duchess, he seemed almost decided to divorce his wife in order to marry my mother, the Queen. Madame de Valentinois, who feared

FIRST PART

a woman whom he had formerly loved, and whose beauty and intelligence might diminish her own favour, joined with the Connétable, who was also desirous that the King should not marry a sister of the Guises ; they won over the late King, and although he mortally hated the Duchess of Valentinois, because he liked Queen Catherine, he worked with them to prevent the King from divorcing her ; but, to prevent all thought of his marrying my mother, the Queen, they brought about her marriage with the King of Scotland, who was a widower since the death of Madame Madeleine, the King's sister. They did this because he was the one who could marry soonest, and they did not keep their undertaking with the King of England, who ardently wished to marry my mother. This failure to keep their promise nearly caused a quarrel between the two Kings. Henry VIII could not be consoled for not having married my mother the Queen ; and, whatever other French princess was proposed to him, he always said that she would never replace the one they had taken from him. It is true that my mother the Queen was perfectly beautiful, and it is remarkable that, although she was the widow of a Duke of Longueville, three Kings wished to marry her. It was her misfortune to marry the least of them, and to be put into a kingdom where she finds nothing but trouble. 'Tis said that I am

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

like her—I fear that I shall be like her also in my unhappy lot, and whatever happiness seems to be in store for me, I cannot believe that I shall enjoy it."

Mademoiselle de Chartres told the Dauphiness these gloomy forebodings were so ill-founded she would not long retain them, and she should not doubt her happiness would equal all expectations.

No one dared think any longer of Mademoiselle de Chartres, for fear of displeasing the King, or because of the thought of failing to win a girl who had hoped for a prince of the blood. Monsieur de Clèves was not held back by any of these considerations. The death of the Duke of Nevers, his father, happening at this time, gave him complete liberty to follow his inclinations ; and, as soon as a decent period of mourning was past, he had no thought but of the means of marrying Mademoiselle de Chartres. He was happy to propose this at a time when events had eliminated other suitors and when he was almost sure that she would not be refused him. What troubled him was the fear of not attracting her, and he would have preferred the happiness of winning her favour to the certainty of marrying her without being loved by her.

The Chevalier de Guise had caused him a certain jealousy ; but, as it was founded

FIRST PART

rather on the merits of this Prince than on any action of Mademoiselle de Chartres, he thought of merely trying to discover whether he was sufficiently fortunate for her to approve of his intentions with regard to her. He saw her only at the Queen's receptions or at assemblies —it was difficult to have a private conversation. He found a way, however ; and told her with all imaginable respect of his intentions and of his passion : he pressed her to let him know the state of her feelings towards him, and he told her that his own were of a nature to make him eternally unhappy if she only obeyed as a duty the will of her mother.

As Mademoiselle de Chartres had a kind and noble heart, she was really touched with gratitude at the conduct of the Prince of Clèves. This gratitude gave her replies and her tone a certain gentleness that sufficed to raise the hopes of a man as thoroughly in love as was the Prince, so that he assumed part of what he desired.

She informed her mother of this conversation, and Madame de Chartres told her that Monsieur de Clèves was so distinguished, had so many good qualities, and gave evidence of so much wisdom for his age that, if she felt an inclination to marry him, she would gladly consent to it. Mademoiselle de Chartres replied that she had noted these good qualities, that she would marry him with less aversion

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

than another, but that she had no particular inclination for him personally.

The very next day the Prince communicated with Madame de Chartres. She received the proposal made to her, and she did not fear that she was giving her daughter a husband she could not love when she gave her the Prince of Clèves. The contract was drawn up ; the King was informed ; and the marriage was announced.

Monsieur de Clèves was happy, without, however, being entirely satisfied ; he saw with much regret that the feelings of Mademoiselle de Chartres did not go beyond esteem and gratitude, and he could not flatter himself that she was hiding more gratifying sentiments since their relationship now permitted her to show them without shocking her extreme modesty. Scarcely a day passed but he complained to her of this.

“ Is it possible ”, said he, “ that I can be other than happy in marrying you ? Yet 'tis true that I am not happy. You feel for me only a sort of kindness that cannot satisfy me ; you are neither impatient, nor uneasy, nor fretful ; you are no more touched by my passion than you would be by an attachment founded merely on the advantage of your fortune and not on your personal charms.”

“ Your complaint is somewhat unjust ”, she said ; “ I do not know what you can wish for

FIRST PART

beyond what I am doing, and it seems to me that propriety does not permit of my doing more.”

“ ‘Tis true”, he replied, “ that you give me certain indications that would satisfy me if there were anything behind them. But, instead of propriety restraining you, it is propriety alone that makes you act as you do. I touch neither your inclinations nor your heart, and my presence causes you neither pleasure nor emotion.”

“ You cannot doubt”, she replied, “ that I am glad to see you, and I blush so often when I see you that you cannot doubt that the mere sight of you causes me emotion.”

“ I am not deceived by your blushes”, said he; “ they come from a feeling of modesty, and not from an emotion of the heart, and I infer from them only the part I really have in them.”

Mademoiselle de Chartres did not know what to reply—these distinctions were above her comprehension. Monsieur de Clèves saw only too clearly how far she was from having feelings that could satisfy him, since it seemed to him that she did not even understand their nature.

The Chevalier de Guise returned from a journey a few days before the wedding. He had seen so many insurmountable obstacles in the way of the intention he had had of marry-

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

ing Mademoiselle de Chartres that he had not been able to flatter himself that he would succeed, and yet he was deeply grieved to see her become the wife of another man. This grief did not stifle his passion, and he remained no less in love. Mademoiselle was not ignorant of the feelings that this Prince had for her. He let her know, on his return, that she was the cause of the extreme sadness seen in his face, and his merit and charm were such that it was difficult to make him unhappy without feeling some pity for him. Nor could she prevent herself from being so touched, but this pity did not lead her to other feelings ; she told her mother the sorrow that this Prince's affection caused her.

Madame de Chartres marvelled at her daughter's sincerity, and with reason, for there never was another person who had this quality to such a degree and so naturally ; but she marvelled no less that her heart was not touched, and the more so because she saw clearly that the Prince of Clèves had not affected it any more than the Chevalier. This caused her to take great pains to attach her to her husband, and to make her understand what she owed to the inclination he had felt for her before he knew her, and to the love he had shown in preferring her to all other eligible women, at a time when no one dared any longer think of her.

FIRST PART

The marriage took place ; the ceremony was performed in the Louvre ; and in the evening the King and the Queens, with all the Court, came to sup at Madame de Chartres', where they were received with exceptional magnificence. The Chevalier de Guise did not dare act differently from the others by not attending this ceremony, but he was so little master of his sorrow that it was easy to notice it.

Monsieur de Clèves did not find that Mademoiselle de Chartres had changed her feelings when she changed her name. As her husband, he had greater privileges ; but he had no different place in his wife's heart. The result was, that while he was her husband, he did not cease to be a suitor, because there was always something to hope for beyond mere possession ; and, although she lived on perfect terms with him, he was not entirely happy. He still had for her a violent and troubled love that prevented his being so. Jealousy had no part in this uneasiness : no husband was ever farther from feeling jealousy, and no woman was ever farther from giving cause for it. Yet she was exposed amid the courtiers : she went every day to the receptions of the Queen and of Madame. All the young and attractive men saw her at home and at the home of her brother-in-law, the Duke of Nevers, who kept open house ; but her beauty inspired such great respect and appeared to be so far removed

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

from love-making that Marshal de Saint-André, although bold and supported by royal favour, was touched by her beauty without daring to let it be seen, except by his attentions and his services. Several others were in a similar state ; and Madame de Chartres added to the decorum of her daughter such careful observation of all conventions that she completed the establishment of her reputation as a woman of unassailable virtue.

The Duchess of Lorraine, while working to bring about peace, had also worked to bring about the marriage of her son, the Duke of Lorraine. This had been arranged with Madame Claude of France, the King's second daughter. The ceremony was fixed for the month of February.

Meanwhile the Duke of Nemours had remained in Brussels, absorbed in, and completely occupied by, his plans for England. His couriers went continually to and fro. His hopes rose higher every day, and at length Lignerolles informed him that it was time for his presence to complete what had been so well begun. He received this news with all the joy that can be felt by a young and ambitious man who sees himself raised to a throne by his reputation alone. His mind had become gradually accustomed to the greatness of this match, and, instead of rejecting it as an impossible achievement—as he had done at first—

FIRST PART

the difficulties had disappeared from his thoughts, and he no longer saw any obstacle. He sent in haste to Paris to give all necessary orders for a magnificent outfit, so as to appear in England with a splendour worthy of the object of his visit, and he hastened to come to Court himself to be present at the wedding of Monsieur de Lorraine.

He arrived on the day before the betrothal, and the same evening he went to inform the King of the progress of his wooing, and to receive orders and advice for all that remained to be done. He went next to the Queen's. Madame de Clèves was not there, so that she did not see him ; nor did she even know of his arrival. She had heard every one speak of this Prince as the handsomest and most attractive man at Court ; and, above all, the Dauphiness had portrayed him in such a way and had spoken of him so frequently to her that she had made her curious—even impatient to see him.

She passed at home the whole day of the betrothal, dressing for the evening ball and royal banquet that were to be given at the Louvre. When she arrived, her beauty and her costume were greatly admired. The ball opened ; and, while she was dancing with Monsieur de Guise, there was a commotion near the door of the room as though some one were coming in for whom the others were making

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

way. Madame de Clèves finished the dance; and, while her eyes sought some one whom she meant to take as partner, the King told her to take the person who had just arrived. She turned and saw a man who she thought at once could be none other than Monsieur de Nemours, stepping over a seat to reach the dancing-floor. The Prince was a man whom it was difficult to see for the first time without surprise, above all on this evening, when the care that he had taken with his dress had still further enhanced the splendour of his bearing. But it was difficult also to see Madame de Clèves for the first time without being greatly astonished.

Monsieur de Nemours was so surprised by her beauty that, when he approached and she bowed to him, he could not refrain from showing his admiration. When they began to dance, there arose, in the room, a murmur of praise. The King and the Queens recalled that they had never met before, and found it somewhat unusual that they should be dancing together without knowing each other. They called them, when the dance was over, without giving them time to speak to anyone, and asked them whether they did not wish to know who they were, and if they did not guess.

“As for me, Madame”, said Monsieur de Nemours, “I am not in doubt; but, as Madame de Clèves has not the same reasons

FIRST PART

for guessing who I am as those I have for recognizing her, I should be glad if Your Majesty would be kind enough to tell her my name.”

“ I fancy ”, said the Dauphiness, “ that she knows it as well as you know hers.”

“ I can assure you, Madame ”, replied Madame de Clèves, who seemed somewhat embarrassed, “ that I do not guess as well as you think.”

“ You guess quite well ”, replied the Dauphiness, “ and there is even something complimentary to Monsieur de Nemours in your not admitting that you know him without ever having seen him.”

The Queen interrupted them to have the dancing continued. Monsieur de Nemours took the Dauphiness. This Princess was perfectly beautiful, and had so appeared in the eyes of Monsieur de Nemours before he went to Flanders; but all the evening he could admire none but Madame de Clèves.

The Chevalier de Guise, who still adored her, was at her feet, and what had just happened caused him great chagrin. He took it as an omen that fate destined Monsieur de Nemours to be in love with Madame de Clèves. And, either because some emotion really showed in her face or because jealousy made the Chevalier de Guise see more than actually existed, he thought she had been affected by

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

the sight of the Duke, and he could not refrain from telling her that Monsieur de Nemours was very fortunate in beginning her acquaintance by an incident somewhat romantic and extraordinary.

Madame de Clèves went home with her mind so full of what had happened at the ball that, although it was very late, she went to her mother's room to tell her about it ; and she praised Monsieur de Nemours to her in such a way that Madame de Chartres had the same idea that had occurred to the Chevalier de Guise.

Next day the wedding ceremony took place. Madame de Clèves again found the Duke of Nemours' bearing and grace so admirable that she was still more struck by him.

The following days she saw him at the Dauphiness' ; she saw him play tennis with the King, and tilt at the ring ; she heard him converse ; and invariably she saw him outstrip others so completely, and make himself such a master of the conversation wherever he was by his bearing and by the charm of his mind, that in a short time he made a deep impression on her heart.

It is true also that, as Monsieur de Nemours had a strong inclination towards her which gave him that gentleness and gaiety that an awakening desire to please inspires, he was even more amiable than was his wont ; so

FIRST PART

that, meeting as they did often and seeing each other the most perfect at Court, they could scarcely fail to attract each other infinitely.

The Duchess of Valentinois was present at all the pleasure-parties, and the King was as ardent and as devoted to her as in the early days of his love. Madame de Clèves, who was at the age when one does not think a woman can be loved when she is over twenty-five, regarded with great astonishment the King's attachment for the Duchess, who was a grandmother and whose grand-daughter had just been married. She often spoke of it to Madame de Chartres.

“ Is it possible, Madame ”, said she, “ that the King has been in love with her so long ? How could he become attached to a woman much older than himself, who had been his father's Mistress, and who, from what I hear, is still the Mistress of many others ? ”

“ It is true ”, replied her mother, “ that it is neither the qualities nor the faithfulness of Madame de Valentinois that caused the King's love, or that have kept it alive—and that is why his love is not excusable ; for, if this woman had possessed youth and beauty joined to good family, if she had had the merit of never having loved, if she had loved the King with complete fidelity, if she had loved him for himself without seeking rank or fortune and without

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

using her power for any ends save those which were good and agreeable to the King himself, one would have to admit the difficulty of refraining from praise of the Prince for the great affection he has for her."

" If I did not fear ", continued Madame de Chartres, " that you would say of me what is said of all women of my age, that they love to tell stories of their day, I could tell you of the beginning of the King's love for the Duchess, and many things about the late King's Court, things that have much bearing, even, on those that are still happening nowadays."

" Far from accusing you of repeating old stories ", replied Madame de Clèves, " I complain, Madame, that you have not told me of current events, and that you have not informed me of the divers interests and of the divers liaisons of the Court. I am so completely ignorant of them that I thought, a few days ago, that the Connétable was on very good terms with the Queen."

" Your opinion was quite opposed to the reality ", replied Madame de Chartres. " The Queen hates the Connétable, and it will be only too evident to him, if she ever has any power. She knows that he has said several times to the King that, of all his children, only the illegitimate ones are like him."

" I should never have suspected this hatred ", interrupted Madame de Clèves, " after seeing

FIRST PART

the care the Queen took to write to the Connétable when he was in prison, the joy she showed on his return, and how she always calls him comrade, just as the King does."

"If you judge by appearances in this place", replied Madame de Chartres, "you will often be deceived; what appears on the surface is almost never the truth. But, to return to Madame de Valentinois—you know that she is called 'Diana of Poitiers.' Her family is very illustrious; it issues from the ancient Dukes of Aquitaine; her grandmother was an illegitimate daughter of Louis XI, and, in short, there is nothing but greatness in her ancestry. Saint-Valier, her father, was mixed up in the affair of the Connétable de Bourbon, of which you have heard. He was condemned to death and taken to the scaffold. His daughter, whose beauty was wonderful and who had already attracted the late King, did so well (I know not what means she employed) that she saved her father's life. The pardon arrived when he was awaiting the death-blow; but fear had so seized upon him that he had lost consciousness, and died a few days later. His daughter appeared at Court as the King's Mistress. The journey to Italy and the King's imprisonment interrupted this love-affair. When he came back from Spain and the Queen Regent went to meet him at Bayonne, she took with her all her maids-of-honour, among whom

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

was Mademoiselle de Pisseleu, who later became Duchess of Étampes. The King fell in love with her. She was inferior in birth, intelligence, and beauty to Madame de Valentinois, and she had only one advantage over the latter—that of extreme youth. I have heard her say several times that she was born the day Diana of Poitiers was married. There was more hatred than truth in this statement, for I am sorely mistaken if the Duchess of Valentinois did not marry Monsieur de Brézé, Grand Seneschal of Normandy, at the time when the King fell in love with Madame d'Étampes. Never was there such hatred as that between these two women. The Duchess of Valentinois could not forgive Madame d'Étampes for having deprived her of the title of the King's Mistress. Madame d'Étampes cherished violent jealousy against Madame de Valentinois because the King had not severed his relations with her. This Prince was not scrupulously faithful to his mistresses. There was always one who enjoyed the title and the honours, but the ladies known as the 'little band' shared him in turns. The loss of his son the Dauphin, who died at Tournon and who was believed to have been poisoned, caused him deep grief. He had neither the same tenderness for his second son, who now reigns, nor the same appreciation of his qualities: he considered that he was not bold

FIRST PART

or vivacious enough. He complained of this one day to Madame de Valentinois, and she told him that she would have him fall in love with her, to make him more lively and more agreeable. She succeeded, as you see. The love has lasted for more than twenty years, without being diminished by time or obstacle.

“The late King was at first opposed to it; and, either because he still loved Madame de Valentinois enough to be jealous or because he was urged on by the Duchess of Étampes, who was in despair at the Dauphin’s attachment to her enemy, it is certain that this love-affair caused him anger and chagrin, of which he gave daily evidence. His son feared neither his anger nor his hatred, and nothing could force him to lessen or hide his love: the King had to get used to it. This opposition to his wishes estranged him still more from the Dauphin, and attached him more to the Duke of Orleans, his third son. He was a comely, handsome Prince, full of ardour and ambition, with an irrepressible youth which needed moderating, but he would have become a very distinguished Prince if age had ripened his judgment.

“The Dauphin’s rank as heir and the King’s favour for the Duke of Orleans caused between the two Princes a sort of emulation that was pushed to hatred. This emulation began in childhood, and had always continued. When

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

the Emperor passed through France, he gave his whole preference to the Duke of Orleans rather than to the Dauphin, who felt it so keenly that, when the Emperor was at Chantilly, he wished to force the Connétable to arrest him without waiting for the King's orders. The Connétable would not do so. The King blamed him afterwards for not having carried out his son's decision ; and, when he banished the Connétable from Court, this reason had much to do with it.

“ The estrangement of the two brothers gave the Duchess of Étampes the idea of enlisting the aid of the Duke of Orleans to support her in the King's favour and to thwart the Duchess of Valentinois. She succeeded in this. The Prince, though not in love with her, supported her interests almost as warmly as the Dauphin did those of Madame de Valentinois. That made two cliques at Court, as you may well imagine. And these intrigues did not stop at women's quarrels.

“ The Emperor, who had retained his feeling of friendship for the Duke of Orleans, had offered several times to cede to him the Duchy of Milan. In the proposals of peace, made later, he held out the hope of giving him the Seventeen Provinces, and of having him marry his daughter. The Dauphin was anxious neither for the peace nor for the marriage. He made use of the Connétable, whom he has

FIRST PART

always loved, to point out to the King the importance of not making his successor's brother as powerful as a Duke of Orleans would be if he had the support of the Emperor and of the Seventeen Provinces. The Connétable was all the more of the Dauphin's opinion because he thus opposed the desires of Madame d'Étampes, who was his bitter enemy and who ardently desired the advancement of the Duke of Orleans.

“ The Dauphin, at the time, was commanding the King's forces in Champagne, and had reduced those of the Emperor to such an extremity that they would have entirely perished if the Duchess of Étampes, fearing that too great a success would make us refuse peace and the alliance of the Emperor with the Duke of Orleans, had not secretly told the enemy to surprise Épernay and Château-Thierry, which were full of victuals. They did this, and, in this way, saved all their army.

“ The Duchess did not long enjoy the success of her treachery. Shortly afterwards, the Duke of Orleans died at Farmoutiers, of some kind of contagious disease. He loved one of the most beautiful women at Court, and was loved by her. I shall not name her, because she has since lived so virtuously, and because she hid with such care her love for the Prince, that her reputation deserves to be respected. Fate willed that she should hear

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

of her husband's death on the very day she learned of the death of the Duke of Orleans, so that she was able to hide the real cause of her affliction without having to restrain her grief.

“ The King did not long survive his son : he died two years later. He recommended the Dauphin to make use of Cardinal de Tournon and Admiral d'Annebault, and he did not mention the Connétable, who was at that time exiled at Chantilly. Yet the first thing the new King did was to recall him and give him charge of affairs.

“ Madame d'Étampes was sent away, and received all the ill-treatment that she could expect from an all-powerful enemy. The Duchess of Valentinois avenged herself to the full on her rival and on all those who had thwarted her. Her power over the King's mind appeared to be even more absolute than it had appeared to be while he was still Dauphin. During the twelve years the King has reigned, she has been absolute mistress over all. She disposes of offices and of affairs of State ; she has had dismissed Cardinal de Tournon, Chancellor Olivier and Villeroy.

“ Those who wished to enlighten the King as to her conduct have perished in the attempt. Count de Taix, Grand Master of Artillery, who did not like her, could not refrain from speaking of her love-affairs, especially that with

FIRST PART

Count de Brissac, of whom the King had already been very jealous. Nevertheless, she played her cards so well that Count de Taix was disgraced : his command was taken from him and—what is almost unbelievable—she had it given to Count de Brissac. Later, she made him Marshal of France.

“The King’s jealousy increased, however, to such a degree that he could not suffer the Marshal’s remaining at Court. But jealousy, harsh and violent in all others, was gentle and moderate in him, because of the extreme respect that he had for his Mistress ; so that he did not dare send his rival away, except on the pretext of giving him the Governorship of Piedmont. Brissac passed many years there ; he came back last winter, ostensibly to ask for troops and for other things necessary for the army he commanded. The wish to see Madame de Valentinois and the fear of being forgotten by her had perhaps more to do with his journey.

“The King received him very coldly. The Guises, who did not like him, but did not dare show their feelings because of Madame de Valentinois, used the Vidame, who was his avowed enemy, to prevent his obtaining any of the things he came to seek. It was not hard to thwart him : the King hated him, and his presence caused him uneasiness, so that he was forced to go back without any

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

fruit of his journey except perhaps the strengthening in Madame de Valentinois of feelings that absence was beginning to weaken. The King had had many other grounds for jealousy, but he did not know of them or he did not dare to complain."

"I do not know, daughter", added Madame de Chartres, "whether you do not think that I have told you of more things than you wished to hear."

"I am very far, Madame, from thus complaining", replied Madame de Clèves, "and, were it not that I fear to be importunate, I should ask you further of many circumstances of which I am ignorant."

Monsieur de Nemours' love for Madame de Clèves was from the first so violent that it deprived him of the taste for, even of the memory of, all the ladies he had loved and with whom he had kept up correspondence during his absence. He did not even take the trouble to seek excuses for breaking with them : he had no patience to listen to their complaints or reply to their reproaches. The Dauphiness, for whom he had had a somewhat strong passion, could not occupy his heart in competition with Madame de Clèves. Even his impatience to go to England began to abate, and he did not urge with as much ardour as before the arrangements necessary for his departure. He often went to the Dauphiness' because Madame de

FIRST PART

Clèves was often there, and he was not averse to having people imagine what had been believed concerning his feelings for the Queen in question. Madame de Clèves seemed to him so precious that he decided to refrain from giving her any indication of his love rather than risk having the public know of it. He did not speak of it even to the Vidame de Chartres, who was his close friend and from whom he hid nothing. He ordered his life so wisely, and was so careful, that no one save the Chevalier de Guise suspected him of being in love with Madame de Clèves ; and she herself would have found it difficult to perceive if the inclination she had for him had not caused her closely to observe his actions, which left no doubt in her mind.

She did not feel as ready to tell her mother what she thought of the feelings of this Prince as she had been to speak to her concerning her other suitors ; without any deliberate intention of hiding the matter from her, she did not speak about it. But Madame de Chartres saw it only too clearly, as well as the inclination that her daughter had for him. This knowledge caused her real pain : she saw clearly the peril of this young girl, loved by a man as attractive as Monsieur de Nemours and feeling some inclination for him. Her suspicions of this inclination were completely confirmed by something that happened a few days later.

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

Marshal de Saint-André, who sought every occasion to show his magnificence, earnestly begged the King, on the pretext of showing him his house, to do him the honour of supping there with the Queens. The Marshal was also very pleased to display before Madame de Clèves a lavish expenditure that did not fall short of profusion.

Some days before the date chosen for the supper, the Dauphin, whose health was rather bad, had fallen ill and had received no visitors. The Queen, his wife, had spent the whole day with him. Towards evening, as he felt better, he called into his room all the nobles who were in the ante-chamber. The Dauphiness withdrew to her apartment ; she found there Madame de Clèves and some other ladies who were her closest friends.

As it was already rather late, and she had not yet dressed, she did not go to the Queen's reception : she gave orders that she was not at home, and she had her jewels brought, in order to choose some for Marshal de Saint-André's ball and to give some to Madame de Clèves, to whom she had promised them. As they were busy with the jewels, the Prince of Condé arrived. His rank gave him immediate access. The Dauphiness said to him that he doubtless came from her husband's apartment, and asked what was going on there.

“ They were arguing with Monsieur de

FIRST PART

Nemours, Madame", he replied, " and he defends with such heat the cause he supports that it must be his own. I believe that he is in love with some lady who makes him feel very uneasy when she goes to a ball, so convinced is he that it is vexatious for a lover to see there the girl he loves."

"What!" exclaimed the Dauphiness, " Monsieur de Nemours does not wish the girl he loves to go to a ball? I knew that husbands might wish that their wives should not go, but I never thought that lovers could be of that opinion."

"Monsieur de Nemours thinks", replied the Prince of Condé, " that a ball is of all things the least tolerable for men in love, both for those who are loved in return and for those who are not. He says that, if they are loved, they suffer at being less loved for several days ; that no woman lives who is not prevented from thinking of her lover by the cares of her toilette ; that these occupy her mind entirely ; that this care in dressing is for everybody as well as for the person they love ; that when they are actually at the dance, they wish to attract all who look at them : that, when they are satisfied with their beauty, they feel a joy the greater part of which is not caused by their lover. He says also that, when a man is not loved, he suffers still more to see the loved one in public ; that, the more people admire her,

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

Marshal de Saint-André, who sought every occasion to show his magnificence, earnestly begged the King, on the pretext of showing him his house, to do him the honour of supping there with the Queens. The Marshal was also very pleased to display before Madame de Clèves a lavish expenditure that did not fall short of profusion.

Some days before the date chosen for the supper, the Dauphin, whose health was rather bad, had fallen ill and had received no visitors. The Queen, his wife, had spent the whole day with him. Towards evening, as he felt better, he called into his room all the nobles who were in the ante-chamber. The Dauphiness withdrew to her apartment ; she found there Madame de Clèves and some other ladies who were her closest friends.

As it was already rather late, and she had not yet dressed, she did not go to the Queen's reception : she gave orders that she was not at home, and she had her jewels brought, in order to choose some for Marshal de Saint-André's ball and to give some to Madame de Clèves, to whom she had promised them. As they were busy with the jewels, the Prince of Condé arrived. His rank gave him immediate access. The Dauphiness said to him that he doubtless came from her husband's apartment, and asked what was going on there.

“They were arguing with Monsieur de

FIRST PART

Nemours, Madame ”, he replied, “ and he defends with such heat the cause he supports that it must be his own. I believe that he is in love with some lady who makes him feel very uneasy when she goes to a ball, so convinced is he that it is vexatious for a lover to see there the girl he loves.”

“ What ! ” exclaimed the Dauphiness, “ Monsieur de Nemours does not wish the girl he loves to go to a ball ? I knew that husbands might wish that their wives should not go, but I never thought that lovers could be of that opinion.”

“ Monsieur de Nemours thinks ”, replied the Prince of Condé, “ that a ball is of all things the least tolerable for men in love, both for those who are loved in return and for those who are not. He says that, if they are loved, they suffer at being less loved for several days ; that no woman lives who is not prevented from thinking of her lover by the cares of her toilette ; that these occupy her mind entirely ; that this care in dressing is for everybody as well as for the person they love ; that when they are actually at the dance, they wish to attract all who look at them : that, when they are satisfied with their beauty, they feel a joy the greater part of which is not caused by their lover. He says also that, when a man is not loved, he suffers still more to see the loved one in public ; that, the more people admire her,

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

the more unhappy he feels at not being loved by her ; that he always fears lest her beauty should give rise to a love more fortunate than his—in short, he is of opinion that there is no suffering equal to that of seeing the loved one at a ball, unless it be to know she is there and not be there oneself.”

Madame de Clèves did not appear to be listening to what the Prince of Condé was saying, but she was paying careful attention to every word. She easily guessed the share she had in the cause upheld by Monsieur de Nemours, and especially in what he said of the suffering caused by not being at a ball attended by the loved one, for he was not to be at Marshal de Saint-André’s ball, as the King had charged him to go and meet the Duke of Ferrara.

The Dauphiness laughed with the Prince of Condé, and did not agree with the opinion of Monsieur de Nemours.

“ There is only one occasion ”, said the Prince, “ on which Monsieur de Nemours agrees that the lady he loves may go to a ball : it is when he gives it himself. He admits that last year, when he gave one for Your Majesty, he considered that his lady-love conferred a favour on him by coming, although she seemed to be merely attending you. He thinks it is always conferring a favour on a lover to take part in a pleasure offered by him—that it is

FIRST PART

always pleasant for a lover to have his lady see him master of a place in which all the Court assembles, and successfully doing the honours."

"Monsieur de Nemours was right", said the Dauphiness, with a smile, "to approve of his lady-love's going to the ball; there were at that time so many ladies to whom he gave the title that, had they not been present, there would have been few people there."

As soon as the Prince of Condé had begun to tell what Monsieur de Nemours thought about going to balls, Madame de Clèves had been seized with a strong desire not to go to Marshal de Saint-André's. She easily persuaded herself that she ought not to go to the house of a man who loved her, and she was very pleased to have a moral reason for doing something that was pleasing to Monsieur de Nemours. She took with her, however, the jewels the Dauphiness had given her; but in the evening, when she showed them to her mother, she told her she did not mean to wear them, that Marshal de Saint-André took such pains to show he was attached to her that she did not doubt he wished to have it thought she shared with the King the entertainment he was going to give, and that, on the pretext of doing the honours in his own house, he would pay her attentions that might perhaps embarrass her.

Madame de Chartres opposed for a time her

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

daughter's resolve, considering it a whim ; but, seeing that she held to it, she gave way, and told her that she must pretend to be ill so as to have an excuse for not going, for her reasons for remaining away would not be approved, and she must prevent people from even suspecting them. Madame de Clèves willingly consented to spend a few days at home, as she was enabled, by so doing, to stay away from a place where Monsieur de Nemours could not be, and he left without having the pleasure of knowing that she would not go.

He returned the day after the ball ; he learned that she had not been present, but, as he did not know that the conversation at the Dauphin's had been repeated in her presence, he was far from believing that he was fortunate enough to have prevented her going.

The next day, while he was at the Queen's talking to the Dauphiness, Madame de Chartres and Madame de Clèves arrived and approached the Princess. Madame de Clèves was simply dressed, like a person who had been ill ; but her face belied her clothes.

“ You look so well ”, said the Dauphiness, “ that I cannot believe you have been ill. I think that the Prince of Condé, by telling you what Monsieur de Nemours thought of dances, persuaded you that you would confer a favour on Marshal de Saint-André by visiting his house, and that that prevented your going.”

FIRST PART

Madame de Clèves blushed because the Dauphiness had guessed so well, and because she had said in the presence of Monsieur de Nemours what she had guessed.

Madame de Chartres saw at once why her daughter had not wished to go to the ball ; and, to prevent Monsieur de Nemours from guessing it as well, she said in a tone that ~~carried~~ conviction :

“ I assure you, Madame, that Your Majesty pays my daughter a compliment she does not deserve. She was really ill, but I think that, had I not prevented her, she would nevertheless have accompanied you and shown herself, changed as she was, so as to have the pleasure of seeing all the wonderful things at last night’s entertainment.”

The Dauphiness believed what Madame de Chartres said. Monsieur de Nemours regretted that it seemed to have some foundation ; on the other hand, Madame de Clèves’ blushing made him suspect that what the Dauphiness had said was not entirely devoid of truth. Madame de Clèves was at first annoyed that Monsieur de Nemours might think that he had prevented her going to Marshal de Saint-André’s, but afterwards she felt a kind of disappointment that her mother had completely destroyed this impression.

Although the conference at Cercamp had broken up, the peace negotiations still con-

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

tinued, and events so turned that, towards the end of February, there was a conference at Câteau-Cambrésis. The same delegates attended, and the absence of Marshal de Saint-André removed for Monsieur de Nemours a rival who was more to be feared for the close watch he kept on all those who approached Madame de Clèves than for any progress he made in her heart.

Madame de Chartres had not intended to let her daughter see that she was aware of her feelings towards Monsieur de Nemours, for fear her daughter should consider her prejudiced about certain things she wished to tell her. She began one day to talk about him ; she said things in his favour and mingled therewith damning praise of his wisdom in being incapable of falling in love, and of his making only an amusement and not a serious affair of his relations with women.

“ It is not ”, she added, “ that he has not been suspected of having a great passion for the Dauphiness. I see that he goes there very often, and I advise you to avoid speaking to him as much as possible, and especially in private, because as the Dauphiness treats you as she does, it would soon be said that you are their go-between, and you know how disagreeable such a reputation is. I think, if this rumour continues, that you would do well to go a little less frequently to the Dauphiness ”,

FIRST PART

so as not to become mixed up with such love-affairs."

Madame de Clèves had never heard the gossip about Monsieur de Nemours and the Dauphiness. She was so surprised at what her mother told her, and it seemed to her she had been so mistaken in all she had thought concerning the feelings of the Duke, that her face showed it. Madame de Chartres noticed this. Just then some people arrived ; Madame de Clèves withdrew, and shut herself up in her boudoir.

It is impossible to describe how she suffered in learning, by what her mother had just told her, the interest she took in Monsieur de Nemours ; she had not hitherto dared admit it to herself. She saw now that the feelings she had for him were those Monsieur de Clèves had so much desired of her ; she thought how shameful it was to have them for a man other than a husband who deserved them. She felt herself hurt and embarrassed by the fear that Monsieur de Nemours might wish to use her as an excuse to see the Dauphiness, and this thought made her determine to relate to Madame de Chartres what she had not yet told her.

She went into her mother's room next morning to carry out her resolution ; but she found that Madame de Chartres was somewhat feverish, so she did not wish to tell her. The

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

indisposition seemed so slight, however, that Madame de Clèves did not absent herself that afternoon from the Dauphiness'. The Princess was in her boudoir with two or three ladies who were her closest friends.

“We were talking of Monsieur de Nemours”, said she, on seeing Madame de Clèves, “and we were admiring the change in him since his return from Brussels. Before going there, he had an infinite number of lady-loves, and it was, indeed, one of his weaknesses, for he cultivated equally those who were worth while and those who were not ; since his return, he knows neither the one nor the other. There never was such a great change. I even find a change in his disposition, and that he is less gay than usual.”

Madame de Clèves made no reply, and she thought with shame that she would have taken all that was said of the change in the Duke for marks of his love, had she not been undeceived. She felt a little bitter towards the Dauphiness on seeing her seek reasons for, and express surprise at, something about which she apparently knew the truth better than anyone. Madame de Clèves could not refrain from letting her see this a little ; and, as the other ladies withdrew, she approached her, and said in a low voice :

“Was what you said just now for me also, Madame ? and do you wish to hide from me

FIRST PART

the fact that you are the person who is the cause of Monsieur de Nemours' change of conduct?"

"You are unjust", replied the Dauphiness: "you know I hide nothing from you. It is true that Monsieur de Nemours, before going to Brussels, had, I think, the intention of giving me to understand that he was not indifferent to me; but since his return he has not even seemed to me to remember what he had done, and I am curious to know what has changed him. It would be difficult for me not to find out", she added; "the Vidame de Chartres, who is his intimate friend, is in love with some one over whom I have some influence, and I shall get to know by this means what has caused the change."

The Dauphiness spoke in a way that convinced Madame de Clèves, and, in spite of herself, she felt calmer and more soothed than she was before. When she returned to her mother's, she learned that she was much worse than when she had left her. The fever had redoubled, and the following days it increased to such a degree that it was evident the illness would be very serious. Madame de Clèves was deeply grieved—she did not leave her mother's room. Monsieur de Clèves passed almost all his time there, because of his interest in Madame de Chartres and to prevent his wife from giving way to sadness,

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

but also to have the pleasure of seeing her ; his love had not diminished.

Monsieur de Nemours, who had always been his good friend, had not ceased to show his friendship since his return from Brussels. During Madame de Chartres' illness, the Duke found means to see Madame de Clèves several times by pretending to call on her husband, or by coming to take him for a walk.

He even called for him at times when he well knew he was not there, and, under the pretext of waiting for him, he stayed in Madame de Chartres' antechamber, where there were always several persons of high rank.

Madame de Clèves frequently came there, and, although she was grief-stricken, she seemed no less beautiful to Monsieur de Nemours. He let her see how interested he was in her grief, and spoke to her in such a kind and gentle way that he easily persuaded her that it was not the Dauphiness whom he loved.

She could not prevent herself from feeling agitated in his presence, and yet she was pleased to see him ; but when he was no longer in her sight, and she thought that the pleasure she felt on seeing him was the beginning of love, she almost decided that she hated him, so great was her suffering at the thought.

Madame de Chartres grew so much worse that her life began to be despaired of ; she

FIRST PART

received what the doctors told her of her peril with a courage worthy of her strong mind and of her piety. When they had left, she dismissed every one, and called Madame de Clèves.

“ We must part, daughter ”, said she, taking her hand. “ The peril in which I am leaving you and the need you have of me increase the grief I feel on leaving you. You have an inclination for Monsieur de Nemours ; I do not ask you to confess it ; I am no longer in a state to make use of your sincerity to guide you. I became aware of this inclination some time ago, but I did not wish to speak to you about it then for fear of making you aware of it yourself. You know it only too well now ; you are on the edge of the abyss ; you will need great efforts and drastic measures to save yourself. Think what you owe to your husband ; think what you owe to yourself ; and think that you are going to lose that reputation which you have acquired and which I so earnestly desired for you. Have strength and courage, daughter ; retire from the Court—force your husband to take you away. Do not fear that you are taking measures too harsh and too difficult : however terrible they may appear at first, they will be more pleasant in the end than the evils of an illicit love-affair. If other reasons than those of virtue and of your duty could bring you to do what I wish, I may say that if

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

anything were capable of troubling the happiness I hope for on leaving this world, it would be to see you fall like other women ; but, if this misfortune must happen to you, I greet death with joy, that I may not be here to see it.”

Madame de Clèves’ tears fell on her mother’s hand, which she held pressed against hers, and Madame de Chartres, being herself deeply moved, said :

“ Good-bye, daughter, let us put an end to a conversation that moves us both too deeply, and remember, if you can, all I have just said.”

She turned away as she finished speaking, ordered her daughter to call her maid, and would not listen or speak any further. Madame de Clèves left the room in a state easy to imagine, and Madame de Chartres had no further thought than that of preparing for death. She lived two days longer, during which she would not see her daughter again—the only person she held dear.

Madame de Clèves was greatly afflicted ; her husband did not leave her ; and, as soon as Madame de Chartres had expired, he took his wife to the country, to get her away from a place that only increased her grief. It had never been equalled. Although tenderness and gratitude played the greater part therein, the need she felt of her mother to protect her against Monsieur de Nemours had nevertheless

FIRST PART

a great share in it. She found herself unfortunate in being left to her own resources at a time when she was so little mistress of her feelings and when she wished so much to have some one who would have sympathized with her and given her strength. The way Monsieur de Clèves treated her made her wish more fervently than ever not to fail in the least in her duty towards him. She showed him more affection and more tenderness than she had hitherto : she did not wish him to leave her side, and it seemed to her that, by dint of attaching herself to him, he would protect her from Monsieur de Nemours.

The Duke came to see Monsieur de Clèves in the country ; he tried his best to pay a visit to Madame de Clèves also ; but she would not receive him ; and, feeling assured that she could not prevent herself from finding him attractive, she made a firm resolution to prevent herself from seeing him, and to avoid as far as was in her power all risk of so doing.

Monsieur de Clèves went up to Paris to attend Court, and promised his wife to return next day ; but he did not return until the day after that.

“ I expected you last night ”, said Madame de Clèves, when he arrived. “ I must reproach you for not coming as you promised. You know that, if I could feel further grief than I

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

do, it would be at the death of Madame de Tournon, which I heard of this morning. I should have been affected by it if I had not known her ; it is always a thing worthy of pity that a woman young and beautiful as she was should die after two days' illness ; but, besides this, she was one of the persons in the world whom I liked most, and she appeared to be as good as she was talented."

"I was very sorry not to be able to return yesterday", replied Monsieur de Clèves ; "but I was so necessary to console a sufferer that it was impossible for me to leave him. As for Madame de Tournon, I advise you not to grieve over her, if you regret her as a really good woman and worthy of your esteem."

"You astonish me", replied Madame de Clèves, "for I have heard you say several times that there was not a woman at Court for whom you had a greater esteem."

"That is so", he replied ; "but women are incomprehensible, and when I consider them all, I deem myself so lucky to have you, that I cannot marvel sufficiently at my good fortune."

"You esteem me above my merits", replied Madame de Clèves, with a sigh, "and the time is not yet come for you to find me worthy of you. Tell me, I pray, what undeceived you regarding Madame de Tournon ?"

"I have been undeceived for some time",

FIRST PART

he replied, “ and have known that she loved Count de Sancerre, to whom she held out hopes of marriage.”

“ I have some difficulty in believing ”, interrupted Madame de Clèves, “ that Madame de Tournon, in view of the extreme aversion she has shown to marriage since she became a widow and the public declarations she has made that she would never remarry, should have held out hopes to Sancerre.”

“ If she had raised no hopes except in him ”, replied Monsieur de Clèves, “ there would be no reason for surprise ; but what is astonishing is that she also held out hopes to Estouteville at the same time, and I will tell you the whole story.”

SECOND PART

“ You know the friendship that exists between Sancerre and me ; yet he fell in love with Madame de Tournon about two years ago, and kept it from me with great care, as he did from every one else. I was far from suspecting it. Madame de Tournon seemed to be still inconsolable for the death of her husband, and lived in the strictest seclusion. Sancerre’s sister was almost the only person she visited, and it was at this house that he fell in love with her.

“ One evening, when there was to be a play at the Louvre and only the arrival of the King and Madame de Valentinois was awaited before beginning, word was brought that the latter had been taken ill, and that the King would not come. It was easily guessed that the Duchess’ illness was some quarrel with the King ; we knew the jealousy he had felt towards Marshal de Brissac when he was at Court, but he had been back in Piedmont for some days, and we could not imagine the reason for this quarrel.

SECOND PART

“ As I was talking about it to Sancerre, Monsieur d’Anville came into the room, and whispered to me that the King was grieved and angry to a pitiable degree ; that, in making up with Madame de Valentinois, a few days previously, a quarrel over Marshal de Brissac, the King had given her a ring and had begged her to wear it ; that, while she was dressing to go to the play, he had noticed she was not wearing this ring, and had asked her for what reason ; that she had appeared surprised on missing it, and had questioned her maids, who, by ill luck or because they had not been warned, had replied that they had not seen it for four or five days.

“ ‘ That was exactly the interval since Marshal de Brissac’s departure’, continued Monsieur d’Anville, ‘ and the King did not doubt she had given him the ring when she said good-bye. This thought revived again the jealousy that was not yet completely allayed, and so violently that he flew into a rage, an unusual thing for him, and bitterly reproached her. He has just returned to his apartment, deeply grieved, but I don’t know whether more by the thought that Madame de Valentinois sacrificed his ring than by the fear of having hurt her by his anger.’

“ As soon as Monsieur d’Anville had finished telling me this news, I went across to Sancerre to let him know of it. I gave it to him as a

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

secret just confided to me, and I forbade him to speak of it.

“ Next morning, I went fairly early to my sister-in-law’s ; I found Madame de Tournon at her bedside ; she did not like Madame de Valentinois, and she well knew that my sister-in-law had no cause to sing her praises. Sancerre had gone to her house after the play ; he had told her about the King’s quarrel with the Duchess, and Madame de Tournon had come to tell my sister-in-law about it, without knowing or without thinking that it was I who had told the story to her lover.

“ As soon as I approached my sister-in-law, she told Madame de Tournon that what had just been said could be confided to me ; and, without waiting for Madame de Tournon’s permission, she told me, word for word, all I had said to Sancerre the evening before. You can imagine my surprise. I looked at Madame de Tournon, who seemed to be embarrassed. Her embarrassment awakened my suspicions. I had told Sancerre only ; he had left me after the play, without giving any reason ; I remembered having heard him praise Madame de Tournon very highly—all these things opened my eyes, and I had little difficulty in guessing that he had a love-affair with her, and that he had seen her after leaving me.

“ I was so annoyed on learning that he was

SECOND PART

hiding this affair from me that I said several things to show Madame de Tournon how imprudent she had been ; I accompanied her to her carriage, and assured her, on leaving her, that I envied the good fortune of him who had told her of the quarrel between the King and Madame de Valentinois.

“ I at once went in search of Sancerre ; I reproached him and told him that I knew of his love for Madame de Tournon, without telling him how I had found it out. He was forced to admit it. I then told him how I knew, and he let me know about their affair ; he told me that, although he was a younger son and very far from having claims to such a good match, yet she had decided to marry him. No one could be more surprised than I was. I told Sancerre to hasten the marriage, and that there was nothing he should not fear on the part of a woman who was cunning enough to play successfully before the world a part so far from the truth. He replied that her grief had been real, but that the inclination she had for him had overcome it, and that she could not have allowed such a great change to appear suddenly. He gave me several other excuses for her conduct, which showed me how much he was in love with her ; he assured me that he would persuade her to consent to my knowing the love he had for her, especially since it was she who had made it known to

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

me. He obliged her to consent, indeed, but with great difficulty, and I was henceforth very much in their confidence.

“ I never saw a woman who behaved better or more charmingly to her lover ; yet I was always shocked by her affectation of grief. Sancerre was so much in love, and so satisfied with the way she treated him, that he scarcely dared urge her to fix the wedding-day, for fear she might think he wished for this rather from interested motives than from real love. He talked of it often with her, and she seemed decided to marry him ; she even began to leave the seclusion in which she had lived, and to visit people again : she came to my sister-in-law’s at hours when many were there from the Court. Sancerre seldom came, but those who were there every evening and frequently saw her found her very attractive.

“ Shortly after she had begun to leave her seclusion, Sancerre thought he saw a slight cooling in the love she had for him. He talked of this to me several times, without my attaching any importance to his complaints ; but at length, when he told me that instead of hastening the wedding, she seemed to be postponing it, I began to think he was not wrong in being uneasy. I replied that, even if Madame de Tournon’s love languished a little at the end of two years, he ought not to be surprised ; that even if, without languishing,

SECOND PART

it was not strong enough to lead her to marry him, he should not complain ; that this marriage would do him great harm in public opinion, not merely because he was not a good enough match for her but also because it would injure her reputation, so that all he could wish for was that she should not deceive him and give him false hopes. I said further that, if she had not courage to marry him and admitted that she loved another, he should not be angry, nor complain, but should continue to feel towards her esteem and gratitude.

“ ‘I am giving you’, said I, ‘the advice I should follow myself, for sincerity so appeals to me that I believe that, if my lady-love, or even my wife, confessed that she was attracted by some one, I should be grieved without being embittered, and should abandon the rôle of lover or husband to advise and comfort her.’ ”

These words made Madame de Clèves blush, and she found therein a certain application to her state that surprised her and caused an agitation from which for some time she could not recover.

“ Sancerre spoke to Madame de Tournon ”, continued Monsieur de Clèves. “ He told her all I had advised him, but she reassured him with such care, and seemed so hurt by his suspicions, that she allayed them completely. She did, indeed, postpone their wedding until after a journey which he was going to make

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

and which would be fairly long, but she behaved so well until his departure, and appeared so grieved by it, that I thought, as he did, that she really loved him. He left about three months ago. During his absence, I seldom saw Madame de Tournon ; you occupied all my thoughts, and I knew merely that he was soon to return.

“ The day before yesterday, on arriving in Paris, I heard that she was dead. I sent to his house to ask if there were news of him, and learned that he had arrived the day before, which was precisely the day of Madame de Tournon’s death. I went to see him at once, expecting to find him deeply moved, but his affliction was much greater than I had imagined.

“ I have never seen a grief so deep and so real. The moment he saw me, he embraced me and burst into tears. ‘ I shall never see her again ’, said he. ‘ I shall never see her again. She is dead ! I was not worthy of her, but I shall soon follow her.’

“ Then he was silent—but from time to time he kept repeating : ‘ She is dead, and I shall never see her again.’ Then he gave way to lamentations and tears, and went on like a man who is beside himself. He told me that she had not written frequently during his absence, but that he was not surprised, because he knew her and was aware how hard she found it to risk writing. He did not doubt but that

SECOND PART

she would have married him on his return ; he considered her the most lovable and most faithful person who ever lived ; he believed himself tenderly loved ; he lost her just at the moment when he was going to bind her to him for ever. All these considerations plunged him into a deep grief that weighed heavily upon him, and I admit that I could not prevent myself from being moved by it.

“ I was forced, however, to leave him to wait upon the King ; I promised that I would soon come back. I returned, indeed, and was never so surprised as when I found him quite different from what I had left him. He was in his room, not in bed, but walking about and stopping suddenly as if beside himself. ‘ Come here ’, said he ; ‘ come and see the most despairing man in the world. I am a thousand times more unhappy than I was a few hours ago, and what I have just learned about Madame de Tournon is worse than death.’

“ I thought that grief had turned his brain, and I could not imagine that there was anything worse than the death of a woman one loves and who loves in return. I told him that, as long as his grief was reasonable, I had approved and had shared it ; but that I should no longer sympathize with him if he gave way to despair and lost his wits.

“ ‘ I should be only too glad to have lost them and my life also ’, he cried. ‘ Madame

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

de Tournon was unfaithful to me, and I hear of her faithlessness and betrayal the day after I hear of her death, at a time when my heart is filled with the most poignant grief and possessed by the tenderest love that ever was felt, at a time when her image is in my heart, the most perfect thing that ever was, and the most perfect in its relationship to me. I find that I was mistaken, and that she does not deserve that I should mourn for her ; yet I am grieved at her death as if she had been true, and I suffer from her falseness as though she were not dead. If I had learned of the change in her before her death, jealousy, anger, rage would have filled me and hardened me, as it were, against the pain of losing her ; but I am in a state such that I can neither console myself nor hate her.'

" You may judge whether I was surprised at what Sancerre said ; I asked him how he had got to know what he had just told me. He explained that, a moment after I had left his room, Estouteville, who is his intimate friend but who knew nothing of his love for Madame de Tournon, had come to see him, that he had no sooner sat down than he began to weep. He had begged to be pardoned for having hidden from him what he was going to tell ; he begged him to pity him ; he came to open his heart to him ; and said that Sancerre saw before him the man in all the world who

SECOND PART

was most grieved by the death of Madame de Tournon.

“ ‘ This name ’, said Sancerre, ‘ so surprised me that, although my first impulse was to tell him that I was more grieved than he, yet I had not strength to speak. He went on and told me that he had been in love with her for the last six months. He had always wanted to tell me this, but she had absolutely forbidden him, and with so much authority that he had not dared disobey her. He had won her heart almost immediately upon falling in love with her ; and, while they had hidden their love from every one and he had never gone openly to her house, he had had the pleasure of consoling her for the death of her husband. In short, he was on the point of marrying her at the time of her death, though this marriage, which was for love, would have appeared to be the result of duty and obedience, for she had won over her father to order her to marry, so that there would not be a too sudden change in her attitude, which had been so opposed to marriage.

“ ‘ As long as Estouteville was speaking ’, said Sancerre, ‘ I believed him, because what he said seemed possible, and because the time mentioned as the beginning of his love for Madame de Tournon was precisely the moment of her seeming change towards me ; but a moment later I thought he was lying, or, at

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

least, day-dreaming. I was on the point of telling him so—then I thought of trying to clear up my doubts. I questioned him; I showed my doubts. At length I worked so well to assure myself of my misfortune that he asked me if I knew Madame de Tournon's writing; he put in my hand four of her letters and her portrait. Just then my brother came in. Estouteville's face was so tear-stained that he was forced to leave, lest this be seen; he said he would return in the evening for what he was leaving with me, and I sent my brother away on the pretext of being unwell, so impatient was I to see the letters Estouteville had left, hoping to find something therein that would fall short of what he had just told me. But—alas! what did I not find therein? What tenderness! what vows! what promises to marry him! what letters! Never had she written such letters to me. So', he added, 'I feel at the same time grief for death and for faithlessness; they are two evils that have frequently been compared, but that have never been experienced together by the same person. I admit, to my shame, that I feel her loss more than her change; I cannot find her guilty enough to be reconciled to her death. If she were alive, I should have the pleasure of reproaching her, and of taking vengeance by making her recognize her injustice. But I shall never see her again', he added, 'I

SECOND PART

shall never see her again—that misfortune is the greatest of all. I wish I could restore her life in exchange for mine. What a wish ! If she returned, she would live for Estouteville. How happy I was yesterday ', he cried ; ' how happy ! I was the most grieved man in the world, but my grief was reasonable, and I found some charm in the thought that I should never be consoled. To-day all my feelings are unjust. I pay to the false love she had for me the same tribute of grief that I thought I owed to a real love. I can neither hate nor love her memory ; I can neither console myself nor grieve. At least ', said he, turning suddenly towards me, ' see to it, I beg you, that I never meet Estouteville—his very name fills me with horror. I well know that I have no cause to complain ; it is my fault for having hidden from him the fact that I loved Madame de Tournon ; if he had known this, he would not perhaps have become attached to her and she would not have been faithless to me ; he sought me out to confide his grief to me. I pity him. And with reason ', he cried ; ' he loved Madame de Tournon, was loved in return, and he will never see her again ; yet I feel that I cannot prevent myself from hating him. And, yet again, I beg you to see to it that I do not meet him.'

" Sancerre began to weep anew, to regret Madame de Tournon, to talk to her and to

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

say to her the tenderest things in the world ; then he changed again to hatred, complaints, reproaches, and imprecations against her. Seeing him so distraught, I well knew that I should need some one to help me calm his mind. I sent for his brother, whom I had just left at the King's ; I went and spoke to him in the antechamber before he went in, and told him what a state Sancerre was in. He gave orders to prevent his seeing Estouteville, and we spent part of the night in trying to bring him to reason. This morning I found him still more afflicted ; his brother stayed with him, and I returned to you."

"No one could be more surprised than I ", then said Madame de Clèves ; "and I thought Madame de Tournon incapable of love and deceit."

"Cunning and dissimulation ", replied Monsieur de Clèves, "cannot go further than she carried them. Note that, when Sancerre thought she had changed towards him, she had really done so, and was beginning to love Estouteville. She told the latter that he consoled her for the loss of her husband, and that he was the cause of her abandoning her great isolation, and it seemed to Sancerre that it was because we had decided that she should no longer appear so grief-stricken.

"She represented to Estouteville that the secrecy concerning the understanding between

SECOND PART

them, and her appearing obliged to marry him by her father's orders, were necessary if he cared for her reputation ; this ensured that Sancerre might be abandoned without his having cause to complain. I must return ", continued Monsieur de Clèves, " to see the poor fellow, and I think you also ought to return to Paris. It is time for you to meet people again, and to receive the numerous visits that cannot possibly be avoided."

Madame de Clèves consented to return ; and she went back next day. Her mind was more at rest than it had been concerning Monsieur de Nemours ; all that Madame de Chartres had said on her death-bed, and the grief of losing her, had so deadened her feelings that she imagined they had been entirely destroyed.

The very evening of her arrival the Dauphiness called, and, after expressing sympathy with her in her loss, she said that, to turn her mind from such sad thoughts, she was going to tell her all that had happened at Court during her absence. She then told her several private matters.

" But what I want most to tell you ", she added, " is that it is certain Monsieur de Nemours is passionately in love, and his most intimate friends are not only not in his confidence but cannot even guess who is the person he loves. Yet this love is strong enough to

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

make him neglect, or rather abandon, the chance of a throne."

The Dauphiness then related all that had happened concerning England. "I heard what I have just told you from Monsieur d'Anville, and he told me this morning that the King sent for Monsieur de Nemours last night, on receiving letters from Lignerolles, who asks to be recalled and who writes to the King that he can no longer justify to the Queen of England Monsieur de Nemours' delays; that she is beginning to be offended by them; and that, while she has given no positive pledge, she has said enough to make him risk a journey. The King read this letter to Monsieur de Nemours, who, instead of talking seriously as he did at the beginning about Lignerolles' hopes, only laughed, jested, and mocked.

"He said the whole of Europe would condemn his imprudence if he risked going to England as a suitor for the Queen's hand, without being assured of the result. 'It seems to me, also', he added, 'that I should be ill-choosing the moment to make the journey just now, when the King of Spain is trying so hard to marry this Queen. He would not be a very serious rival, perhaps, in a love-affair; but I suppose that, for a marriage, Your Majesty would not advise me to compete with him.'

SECOND PART

“‘I should so advise on this occasion’, replied the King, ‘but you will not have to compete with him. I know he has other intentions ; and, even if he had not, Queen Mary was too uncomfortable under the Spanish yoke for me to believe that her sister would wish to assume it, and that she will allow herself to be dazzled by so many united crowns.’

“‘If she does not allow herself to be dazzled by them’, retorted Monsieur de Nemours, ‘she will probably wish to ensure her happiness by love. She loved Lord Courtenay some years ago ; Queen Mary loved him too, and would have married him with the consent of the nation, had she not known that the youth and beauty of her sister Elizabeth appealed more to him than did the hope of reigning. Your Majesty knows that the violent jealousy she felt led her to imprison both of them, to exile Lord Courtenay later, and determined her finally to marry the King of Spain. I think that Elizabeth, who is now on the throne, will soon recall this nobleman, and will choose a man she has loved, who is very attractive, who has suffered so much for her, rather than another whom she has never seen.’

“‘I should be of your opinion’, replied the King, ‘if Courtenay were still alive ; but I learned a few days ago that he had died at Padua, where he was exiled. I quite see’, he added, as he left Monsieur de Nemours, ‘that

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

your wedding will have to be conducted like the Dauphin's would be, by sending ambassadors to marry the Queen of England.'

"Monsieur d'Anville and the Vidame, who were with Monsieur de Nemours in the King's apartments, are convinced that it is this same love-affair that has turned him aside from such a great undertaking. The Vidame, who sees him more intimately than anyone else, told Madame de Martigues that the Duke is so changed he no longer recognizes him, and, what astonishes him still more, is that he sees him visit no one, nor absent himself at any particular times ; so that he thinks the Duke has no understanding with the person he loves ; and that is why Monsieur de Nemours is hard to recognize—when he is seen in love with a woman who does not return his love."

What a spell these words of the Dauphiness cast over Madame de Clèves ! How could she fail to recognize herself as the person whose name was unknown, how fail to be full of gratitude and tenderness on learning, from a source that was not open to suspicion, that the Duke who already touched her heart was hiding his love from every one, and neglecting, for love of her, the chance of a throne ? Words cannot express what she felt and the agitation that seized upon her heart. If the Dauphiness had looked at her carefully, she would have easily noticed that the things she had just told

SECOND PART

her were not indifferent to her ; but, as she had no suspicion of the truth, she went on talking without restraint.

“ Monsieur d’Anville ”, she added, “ who, as I have just said, told me all this, thinks I know more than he does, and has such a high opinion of my charms that he is convinced I am the only person who could cause such a great change in Monsieur de Nemours.”

The Dauphiness’ concluding words caused Madame de Clèves another kind of emotion than the one she had recently felt. “ I should easily share Monsieur d’Anville’s opinion ”, she replied, “ and it is very probable, Madame, that no less than a princess such as you could cause the Queen of England to be scorned.”

“ I would admit it to you if I knew it was so ”, replied the Dauphiness, “ and I should know if such were the case. Passions of this kind do not go unnoticed by those who give rise to them : they are the first to notice them. Monsieur de Nemours has never shown me more than polite attentions ; but there is, nevertheless, such a great difference between his former and his present attitude towards me that I can assure you I am not the cause of his indifference towards the throne of England.

“ I am forgetting myself with you ”, added the Dauphiness, “ and not recalling that I have to visit Madame Elizabeth. You know the peace treaty is almost completed, but you do

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

not know that the King of Spain would not accept a single clause of it except on condition that he, instead of Don Carlos, his son, should marry Madame. The King had much difficulty in accepting this. At length he has consented, and a short time ago he went to announce the news to her. I think she will be inconsolable : it is not pleasing to marry a man of the age and disposition of the King of Spain, especially to her, who has all the vivacity that accompanies youth and beauty, and who was expecting to marry a young prince for whom she had an inclination without having seen him. I do not know whether the King will find her quite as obedient as he desires ; he has charged me to see her, because he knows she loves me, and because he believes that I shall have some influence over her. I shall afterwards pay quite a different visit : I shall go to rejoice with Madame the King's sister. All is arranged for her wedding with the Duke of Savoy, and he will soon be here. No great person of the age of this Princess has had such unalloyed pleasure in marrying. The Court will be finer and fuller than it has ever been ; and, in spite of your bereavement, you must come and help us show our visitors that we have no ordinary beauties."

After these words, the Dauphiness left. Madame de Clèves, and next day the marriage was announced. Some days later the King

SECOND PART

and the Queens went to see Madame de Clèves. Monsieur de Nemours, who had waited for her return with great impatience and who earnestly wished to see and to speak to her alone, waited to pay his visit until every one had left and no one else was likely to come. He succeeded in his plan, and arrived as the last callers were leaving.

Madame de Clèves was reclining on her bed ; the weather was hot, and the sight of Monsieur de Nemours heightened still further her colour, which did not diminish her beauty. He took a seat opposite her, with the fear and timidity to which real love gives rise. He remained some time without being able to speak. Madame de Clèves was no less abashed, so that they both remained for some time in silence. At last Monsieur de Nemours opened the conversation by formally expressing his sympathy in her bereavement. Madame de Clèves, being quite disposed to continue the conversation on this subject, talked at length of her loss, saying, finally, that, when time had lessened the acuteness of her grief, she would still be so strongly influenced by it that her disposition would be changed.

“Great afflictions and deep love”, replied Monsieur de Nemours, “make great changes in the mind ; and, as for me, I do not know myself since I came back from Flanders. Many people have noticed the change, and

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

even the Dauphiness was talking to me about it only yesterday."

"It is true", replied Madame de Clèves, "that she has noticed it, and I think I heard her say something about it."

"I am not sorry, Madame", replied Monsieur de Nemours, "that she remarked it, but I should like her not to be alone in doing so. There are persons to whom one does not dare give evidences of the love one feels for them, except in things that do not concern them; and, not daring to show one loves them, one would like them at least to see that one does not wish to be loved by anyone else. One would like them to know that there is no beauty, whatever its rank, that one does not look upon with indifference, and no throne that one would buy at the price of never seeing them again. Women generally judge the love one has for them", he continued, "by the care one takes to please them and to seek their company, but this is not difficult if they be in the least attractive. What is difficult is not to give way to the pleasure of following them, to avoid them for fear of letting people see, and almost of letting *them* see the feelings one has for them. And what stamps still more an attachment as real is to become just the contrary of what one was, to have no longer ambition or pleasure, after having been busy all one's life with one or the other."

SECOND PART

Madame de Clèves easily understood the share she had in these words. It seemed to her that she ought to reply and not tolerate them. It seemed to her that she ought not to understand them, or show that she took them as applying to her ; she thought she ought to speak ; and thought she ought to say nothing. What Monsieur de Nemours had said pleased her and offended her equally ; she saw therein the confirmation of all the Dauphiness had made her think ; she found therein something polite and respectful, but also something bold and too intelligible. The inclination she had for the Duke gave rise to an agitation which she could not control. The most obscure speech of a man one loves causes more agitation than open declarations from a man one does not love. She remained, therefore, without replying, and Monsieur de Nemours would have noticed her silence, which he could not have regarded as a bad omen, if the arrival of Monsieur de Clèves had not put an end to the conversation and to the visit.

Monsieur de Clèves came to give his wife news of Sancerre, but she had no great curiosity for the rest of that affair. She was so occupied with what had just happened that she could scarcely hide the wandering of her thoughts. When she was free to meditate, she recognized that she had been mistaken when she thought she had no longer anything but indifference

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

for Monsieur de Nemours. What he had said had made all the impression he could wish for, and had quite convinced her of his love. The Duke's actions agreed too well with his words to leave any doubt in the mind of the Princess. She no longer deceived herself with the hope of not loving him ; she thought merely of never giving him any sign of her love. This was a difficult undertaking, of which she already knew the perplexities—she knew that the sole means of success was to avoid the Duke's presence ; and, as her mourning allowed her to be more retired than usual, she used this pretext to frequent no more the places where she might see him. She was in deep melancholy ; her mother's death appeared to be the cause, and no other reason was sought.

Monsieur de Nemours was in despair because he almost never saw her ; and, knowing that he would not find her at any reception or at any of the entertainments which all the courtiers attended, he could not bring himself to appear there ; he pretended to be a very ardent hunter, and arranged parties for the days when the Queens held their receptions. A slight illness served for a long time as a pretext for staying at home, and for avoiding all the places where he well knew Madame de Clèves would not be.

Monsieur de Clèves was ill about the same time. Madame de Clèves did not leave his

SECOND PART

room during his illness, but, when he was better and saw people—among others Monsieur de Nemours, who, on the pretext of still being weak, passed the greater part of the day with him—she found that she could no longer stay there ; yet she had not the strength to leave the room the first few times he came—she had been too long without seeing him for her to decide not to see him. The Duke found means of making her understand—by talking in a way that seemed general, but that she understood nevertheless, because what he said was similar to what he had said in her apartment—that he went hunting to be able to day-dream, and that he did not go to receptions because she was not there.

At length she carried out her resolution to leave her husband's room when Monsieur de Nemours was there ; yet she found it extremely difficult to do so. The Duke saw she was avoiding him, and was deeply affected.

At first, Monsieur de Clèves did not notice his wife's conduct, but at length he remarked that she would not remain in his room when anyone came. He mentioned this to her, and she replied that she did not think it proper for her to be every evening with the youngest of the courtiers, that she begged him to approve of her leading a more retired life than she had hitherto led, that her mother's virtue and

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

presence had authorized many things that a woman of her age could not permit herself.

Monsieur de Clèves, who was usually very kind and yielding towards his wife, was not so on this occasion, and he told her he was absolutely opposed to her changing her way of living. She was on the point of telling him that a rumour was abroad of Monsieur de Nemours being in love with her, but she had not the courage to name him. She felt ashamed, also, of wishing to give a false reason and hide the truth from a man who had such a high opinion of her.

Some days later the King was in the Queen's apartment at her reception time ; the conversation turned on horoscopes and predictions. Opinions were divided as to the extent to which they were to be believed. The Queen had faith in them ; she maintained that, after the number of things that had been foretold and had come to pass, it could not be doubted that there was something in this science. Others maintained that, of the infinite number of prophecies, so few came true that luck was evidently the controlling factor.

“ At one time ”, said the King, “ I was curious to know what the future had in store, but so many false or improbable things were told me that I am convinced the truth cannot be known. Some years ago there came here a man with a great reputation for astrology.

SECOND PART

Every one went to see him ; I went, like the rest, but without saying who I was, and I took with me Monsieur de Guise and Descars ; I let them precede me. Nevertheless, the astrologer addressed me first, as if he had judged me to be the master of the others ; perhaps he knew me—yet he said something that was not suitable had he known me. He predicted that I should be killed in a duel. He then told Monsieur de Guise that he would be killed from behind, and Descars that he would have his head broken by a kick from a horse. Monsieur de Guise was almost insulted by the prediction, as though he had been accused of being destined to run away. Descars was not exactly satisfied to find that he was fated to die by such an untoward accident. In short, we all left very ill-pleased with the astrologer. I do not know what will happen to Monsieur de Guise and Descars, but there is little likelihood that I shall be killed in a duel. The King of Spain and I have just made peace, and, even if we had not, I doubt whether we should have fought, and whether I should have challenged him, as my father did Charles V."

In view of the fate that the King had said was predicted for him, those who had defended astrology abandoned the cause, and agreed that no faith should be put in it. "As for me", said Monsieur de Nemours aloud, "I am the one man in the world who should trust it the

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

least", and, turning towards Madame de Clèves, near whom he was: "It was predicted", he whispered, "that I should be happy in the good graces of the one person in the world for whom I had the most ardent and most respectful love. You can judge, Madame, whether I have cause to believe predictions."

The Dauphiness, who thought, from what Monsieur de Nemours had said aloud that what he was whispering was some false prediction, asked the Duke what he was saying to Madame de Clèves. If he had had less presence of mind, he would have been confused by this question; but, replying without hesitation, he said: "I was saying, Madame, that it was predicted to me that I should rise to such great fortune that I should not even dare lay claim to it." "If that is the only prediction made to you", retorted the Dauphiness, with a smile, as she thought of the English affair, "I advise you not to decry astrology, and you could even find reasons to support it." Madame de Clèves quite understood what the Dauphiness meant; but she understood just as well that the good fortune alluded to by Monsieur de Nemours was not that of being King of England.

As some time had passed since the death of her mother, she had to begin reappearing in Society and attending Court, as had been her wont. She saw Monsieur de Nemours at the

SECOND PART

Dauphiness'; she saw him at Monsieur de Clèves', where he frequently came with other nobles of his age so as not to be remarked ; but she could no longer see him except with an agitation that he easily noticed.

However much she tried to avoid his eyes and to talk less with him than with others, certain things escaped her on the impulse of the moment that caused the Duke to conclude that she was not indifferent to him. A person less acute than he would, perhaps, not have noticed this, but he had been loved so often that it would have been difficult for him not to know when he was loved. He saw clearly that the Duke of Guise was his rival, and the latter knew that Monsieur de Nemours was his. He was the only man at Court who had discovered this truth ; his interests had made him see more clearly than the others. The knowledge each had of his rival's feelings gave rise to bitterness that showed in everything, without, however, breaking forth into any quarrel. But they were opposed in all things : they were always on opposite sides when tilting at the ring, in barrier tournaments, and in all sports in which the King took an interest, and their emulation was so great that it could not be hidden.

The English affair often came into the mind of Madame de Clèves ; it seemed to her that Monsieur de Nemours would not hold out

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

against the King's advice and the insistence of Lignerolles. She saw, with anxiety, that the latter had not yet returned, and she awaited him with impatience. If she had followed her impulse, she would have sought exact information about the progress of this affair ; but the same feeling that gave rise to the curiosity obliged her to 'hide it, and she merely inquired about the beauty, intelligence, and disposition of Queen Elizabeth. There was brought to the King a portrait of Elizabeth that she found more beautiful than she would have wished, and she could not refrain from saying that it flattered her.

" I do not think so ", replied the Dauphiness, who was present ; " this Princess has the reputation of being beautiful and of more than ordinary intelligence, and I know full well that she has been cited as an example to me all my life. She must be attractive if she resembles her mother, Anne Boleyn. No other woman had ever so much charm and attractiveness in her person and disposition. I have heard that her expression had a certain vivacity and originality, and that she did not resemble in the least other English beauties."

" Just so ", replied Madame de Clèves ; " I have heard it said that she was born in France."

" Those who thought so were mistaken ",

SECOND PART

replied the Dauphiness, “ and I will tell you her story in a few words.

“ She was of a good English family. Henry VIII had been in love with her sister and with her mother, and it was even suspected that she was his daughter. She came here with Henry VII’s sister, who married King Louis XII. This Princess, who was young and gay, was sorry to leave the French Court after her husband’s death ; but Anne Boleyn, who had the same tastes as her mistress, could not bring herself to leave. The late King was in love with her, and she remained as maid-of-honour to Queen Claude. This Queen died, and the King’s sister, Marguerite, Duchess of Alençon and later Queen of Navarre, whose *Heptameron* you have seen, took her into her service, and she acquired, by being with the Duchess, some tinge of the new religion. Later she returned to England, and charmed every one: she had the manners of France, which appeal to all nations: she sang well, and danced admirably. She became maid to Queen Catharine of Aragon, and King Henry VIII fell madly in love with her.

“ Cardinal Wolsey, his favourite and Chancellor, had ambitions for the Papacy ; and, ill-satisfied with the Emperor, who had not supported his pretensions, he decided to avenge himself and to ally his royal master with France. He instilled into Henry’s mind that

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

the marriage with the Emperor's aunt was null and void, and proposed that he should marry the Duchess of Alençon, whose husband had just died. Anne Boleyn, who was ambitious, looked upon this divorce as the way that might lead her to the throne. She began to impart to the King of England ideas of the religion of Luther, and engaged the late King to favour at Rome Henry's divorce in hopes of the marriage with the Duchess of Alençon.

“Cardinal Wolsey arranged to be sent to France on the pretext, among others, of negotiating this affair ; but his master could not bring himself to allow even the proposal, and he sent orders to Calais that the marriage was not to be mentioned.

“On his return from France, Cardinal Wolsey was received with honours like those accorded to the King himself : no favourite ever carried pride and vanity to such an extreme. He arranged an interview between the two Kings, and it took place at Boulogne. Francis I offered his hand to Henry VIII, who declined the honour. They entertained each other in turn with outstanding magnificence, and gave each other costumes like those they had had made for themselves. I remember having heard that those the late King sent to the King of England were of crimson satin, trimmed in triangles with pearls and diamonds, and the cloak was of white velvet, embroidered

SECOND PART

with gold. After spending some days at Boulogne, they went together to Calais. Anne Boleyn lodged with Henry VIII, having the retinue of a queen, and Francis I gave her the same gifts and paid the same homage to her as if she were a queen indeed. At length, after nine years of love, Henry VIII married her, without waiting for the dissolution of his first marriage, which had been for a long time in instance at Rome. The Pope pronounced the fulminations against him without delay ; and Henry was so irritated by this that he declared himself Head of the Church, and dragged all England into the unfortunate schism in which you see her.

“ Anne Boleyn did not long enjoy her greatness ; for, when she thought it most assured by the death of Catharine of Aragon, one day, when she was present with all the Court at tiltings at the ring held by her brother, Viscount Rochford, the King was seized with such jealousy that he suddenly withdrew from the spectacle and returned to London, having left orders for the arrest of the Queen, Viscount Rochford, and several others whom he believed to be her lovers or confidants. Although this jealousy appeared to have arisen at the moment, it had for some time previously been inspired by Viscountess Rochford, who, finding unbearable the close intimacy between her husband and the Queen, had led the King to

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

see it as a criminal relationship ; so that he, who was, moreover, in love with Jane Seymour, thought only of ridding himself of Anne Boleyn. In less than three weeks he had the Queen and her brother tried and beheaded ; and he married Jane Seymour. He had several wives after her, and divorced them or had them executed—among others Catherine Howard. The Countess of Rochford was her confidante, and was beheaded at the same time. Thus was she punished for the crimes she had attributed to Anne Boleyn ; and Henry VIII died after becoming extremely corpulent.”

All the ladies who were present during the Dauphiness’ story thanked her for having so well-informed them about the English Court, and among others Madame de Clèves, who could not refrain from asking her still further questions about Queen Elizabeth.

The Dauphiness was having miniatures painted of all the Court beauties, to send to her mother the Queen. The day that Madame de Clèves’ portrait was being finished, the Dauphiness came to pass the afternoon with her. Monsieur de Nemours did not fail to be present : he neglected no occasion to see Madame de Clèves, without, however, letting it be seen that he sought her. She was so bewitching that day that he would have fallen in love with her had he not already done

SECOND PART

so ; he did not dare, however, keep his eyes on her while she was sitting for the portrait, and he feared to show too clearly the pleasure he had in looking at her.

The Dauphiness asked Monsieur de Clèves for a small portrait he had of his wife, to compare it with the one that was being finished. Every one expressed an opinion on one and the other, and Madame de Clèves told the artist to touch up something in the coiffure of the one that had just been brought. The artist, in order to do this, took the portrait from its case, and after working upon it, put it on the table.

Monsieur de Nemours had long desired to possess a portrait of Madame de Clèves. When he saw the one that belonged to Monsieur de Clèves, he could not resist the temptation to steal it from a husband whom he believed to be tenderly loved ; and he thought that, among the many persons who were there, he would not be suspected more than another.

The Dauphiness was sitting on the bed and speaking in a low voice to Madame de Clèves, who was standing in front of her. Madame de Clèves noticed, through one of the curtains that was only partly drawn, Monsieur de Nemours with his back against the table at the foot of the bed, and she saw that, without turning his head, he was adroitly taking something from the table. She had no difficulty

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

in guessing that it was her portrait, and she was so agitated that the Dauphiness noticed she was not listening to her, and asked her aloud what she was looking at. Monsieur de Nemours turned round at these words : he caught the eye of Madame de Clèves, who was still looking at him, and he thought it not impossible that she had seen what he had just done.

Madame de Clèves was not a little embarrassed. Reason required her to ask for her portrait ; but, if she asked for it openly, she would let every one know the feelings the Duke had for her ; and, if she asked him for it in private, she would encourage him to declare his love to her—in short, she considered it better to leave him with it, and she was glad to grant him a favour that was in her power without his knowing even that she was so doing. Monsieur de Nemours, who noticed her embarrassment and who almost guessed the reason for it, drew near and whispered to her : “ If you saw what I dared do, be kind enough, Madame, to let me think you do not know. I dare not ask you more.” And he withdrew after saying this, without waiting for a reply.

The Dauphiness left for her promenade, followed by all her maids. Monsieur de Nemours went home and shut himself up, not being able to bear in public the joy of possessing a portrait of Madame de Clèves. He

SECOND PART

experienced all the most agreeable feelings to which love can give rise : he loved the most lovable person of the Court ; he was bringing her to love him in spite of herself, and he saw in all she did the kind of emotion and embarrassment that love causes in the innocence of first youth.

That evening the portrait was searched for with great care ; as the case was found in its place, it was not suspected that the portrait had been stolen, but rather that it had chanced to fall down somewhere. Monsieur de Clèves was grieved at the loss, and, after a further useless search, he said to his wife, in a way which showed he did not believe what he said, that she had doubtless some hidden lover to whom she had given this portrait or who had stolen it, and that anyone other than a lover would not have been satisfied with the painting without the case.

These words, though said laughingly, made a deep impression on Madame de Clèves' mind ; they caused her remorse. She reflected on the violence of the inclination that was bearing her towards Monsieur de Nemours ; she found that she was no longer mistress of her face and speech ; she recalled that Lignerolles had returned, that she feared no longer the English affair, that she had no longer any suspicions about the Dauphiness, that, in short, there was no longer anything to protect

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

her, and that the only safety for her would be in going away. But, as she was not free to depart, she found herself in dire straits, and ready to fall into what appeared to her to be the greatest of misfortunes—that of letting Monsieur de Nemours see the inclination she had for him. She recalled all that Madame de Chartres had said to her on her death-bed, and the advice she had given her, to take any means, however difficult, rather than embark on a love-affair. What Monsieur de Clèves had said to her about frankness, when he was speaking of Madame de Tournon, came back to her mind. It seemed to her that she ought to confess to him the inclination she had for Monsieur de Nemours. This thought occupied her mind for some time ; then she was surprised that she had entertained it ; she found madness therein, and fell again into the embarrassment of not knowing to what decision to come.

The peace was signed. Madame Elizabeth, after much aversion, had decided to obey her father, the King. The Duke of Alva had been nominated to come and marry her in the name of His Catholic Majesty, and he was soon to arrive. The Duke of Savoy was expected to come and marry Madame, the King's sister, and the ceremonies were to be celebrated at the same time. The King's only thought was to make the weddings famous by entertain-

SECOND PART

ments in which he could show off the skill and magnificence of his courtiers. Plans were made on the grandest scale for the plays and the ballets ; but the King considered these entertainments too private, and wished for some of wider appeal. He decided on a tournament, to which foreigners could come, and which could be seen by the masses. All the princes and young nobles entered with joy into the King's plans, and, above all, the Duke of Ferrara, Monsieur de Guise, and Monsieur de Nemours, who excelled all others in these particular sports. The King chose them to be, with himself, the four challengers of the tournament.

Proclamation was made throughout the realm that, in the city of Paris, the field would be taken on the fifteenth day of June by His Most Christian Majesty and by the Princes Alphonse d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, François de Lorraine, Duke of Guise, and Jacques de Savoie, Duke of Nemours, and held against all comers, as follows :

First combat : on horseback in the lists ; double breastplates ; five lances to be broken, and one for the ladies.

Second combat : with swords, either singly or in pairs, at the choice of the Marshals of the Field.

Third combat : on foot ; three assaults with pikes and six with swords ; the challengers to

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

supply lances, swords, and pikes for the champions to choose. If, in running the course, the antagonist's horse is struck, the offender to be disqualified. There will be four Marshals of the Field, and the assailants who break most lances and acquit themselves best will receive a prize, the value of which is to be determined by the judges.

All the champions, French or foreign, were required to come and touch one of the shields hung above the *perron*, or several of them if they so desired. There they would find a knight-at-arms to receive and enrol them, according to their rank and the shields they had touched.

The champions were required to have a squire bring their shield with their arms to hang above the *perron* three days before the opening of the tournament. Otherwise they would not be received without the consent of the challengers.

Great lists were built near the Bastille, beginning at Tournelles Palace, crossing the Rue Saint-Antoine, and ending at the Royal Mews. At each side were platforms and an amphitheatre with covered *loges*, forming a sort of gallery, an imposing array capable of holding a vast concourse of people. All the princes and lords were busy, to the exclusion of all else, with the details of preparing all necessary to make a brave show, and of working

SECOND PART

into their emblems and mottoes some allusion to the ladies they loved.

Shortly before the arrival of the Duke of Alva, the King had a game of tennis with Monsieur de Nemours, the Chevalier de Guise, and the Vidame de Chartres. The Queens went to see them play, followed by all their ladies-in-waiting, and among others Madame de Clèves.

When the game was over and they were leaving the courts, Chastelart drew near to the Dauphiness and told her that chance had just put into his hands a love-letter that had fallen from Monsieur de Nemours' pocket. The Princess, who was always curious concerning the affairs of the Duke, told Chastelart to give it to her : she took it, and followed her mother-in-law, the Queen, who was leaving with the King to see the work on the lists. After spending some time there, the King had led in some horses he had recently had brought there. Although they were not yet trained he wished to ride them, and had one given to each of those who had followed him. The King and Monsieur de Nemours happened to be on the most spirited. The horses tried to rush at each other. Monsieur de Nemours, fearing the King would be hurt, suddenly backed his horse and ran it against a pillar of the enclosure with such force that the shock made him sway. They ran to him, thinking

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

he was seriously hurt. Madame de Clèves thought him still more hurt than the others did. The interest she had in him caused her an apprehension and an emotion that she did not think of hiding : she drew near him along with the Queens, and with so changed a face that a man less interested than the Chevalier de Guise might have been aware of it ; so he easily noticed it, and paid more attention to the state of Madame de Clèves than he did to that of Monsieur de Nemours.

The blow that the Duke had given himself caused him such a great dizziness that he remained for some time with his head leaning on those who were supporting him. When he raised it, he first saw Madame de Clèves ; he knew from her face the sympathy she felt for him, and he looked at her in a way that told her how much he was touched by it. He then expressed his thanks to the Queens for the kindness they had shown, and apologized for being in such a state in their presence. The King ordered him to retire and to rest.

Madame de Clèves, after recovering from the fright she had had, soon reflected on the signs of it she had shown. The Chevalier de Guise did not long leave her in hopes that no one had noticed them. He gave her his hand to accompany her out of the lists.

“ I am more to be pitied, Madame, than Monsieur de Nemours ”, said he. “ Excuse

SECOND PART

me if I do not maintain the deep respect that I have always had for you, and if I show the acute suffering that I feel at what I have just seen ; this is the first time I have been bold enough to speak to you, and it will be the last. Death, or at least an eternal exile, will take me away from a place where I can no longer live, since I have just lost the sad consolation of believing that all those who dare aspire to you are as unhappy as I.”

Madame de Clèves merely replied in a few ill-arranged words as though she had not understood what Monsieur de Guise meant. At any other time she would have been offended at his speaking of his feelings for her, but at this moment she felt only pain on finding that he had noticed those she had for Monsieur de Nemours. The Chevalier de Guise was so convinced of them, and so grief-stricken, that from that day he decided never to think of winning Madame de Clèves’ love. But, to give up this enterprise, that had seemed to him so difficult and so glorious, he needed another great enough to occupy him : he made up his mind to take Rhodes—about which he had already vaguely thought ; and, when death cut him down in the flower of his youth, and at the moment when he had acquired the reputation of being one of the greatest princes of the century, the only regret he showed at leaving this world was not to have

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

been able to carry out this great resolution, the success of which he considered to be assured, so thorough had been his preparation.

Madame de Clèves, on leaving the lists, went to the Queen's, with her mind full of what had happened ; Monsieur de Nemours arrived shortly after, magnificently dressed and as though he felt nothing of the accident that had happened to him—he appeared even gayer than usual, and the joy of what he thought he had seen gave him an air that increased his attractiveness. Every one was surprised when he came in, and no one neglected to ask how he was—except Madame de Clèves, who stayed near the fire-place without appearing to see him. The King came out of a side-room, and, seeing him among the others, called him over to talk to him about his accident. Monsieur de Nemours passed near Madame de Clèves and said, in a low voice : “ I received to-day, Madame, evidence of your sympathy ; but not of that of which I am most worthy.” Madame de Clèves suspected that the Duke had noticed the sensitiveness that she had shown concerning him, and his words showed her that she was not mistaken. She was greatly pained to see that she was no longer capable of hiding her feelings, and that she had let the Chevalier de Guise witness them. She was much pained also that Monsieur de Nemours should know of them ; but this pain

SECOND PART

was not unmitigated—it was mixed with something akin to pleasure.

The Dauphiness, who was extremely impatient to know what there was in the letter Chastelart had given her, came over to Madame de Clèves. “ Go read this letter ”, she said ; “ it is addressed to Monsieur de Nemours, and appears to be from the lady for whom he has abandoned all the others. If you cannot read it now, keep it ; come to-night to my couchee to return it to me, and to let me know whether you recognize the writing.”

The Dauphiness retired after these words, and left Madame de Clèves so astonished and dazed that it was some time before she could move. She was so impatient and agitated that she could not stay at the Queen’s. She went home, although it was not the usual hour for her departure. She held the letter with trembling hand, her mind so confused that no thought was distinct, and she found herself in a kind of unbearable pain that she did not recognize and that she had never before felt. As soon as she was in her room, she opened the letter, and read as follows :

“ I have loved you too much to let you think that the change you see in me is a result of my fickleness. I wish to inform you that your faithlessness is the cause of it. You are quite surprised that I talk to you of your faithlessness. You had hidden it from me with such skill,

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

and I took so much care to hide from you that I knew of it, that you have cause to be astonished that it is known to me. I am surprised myself that I have succeeded in showing no sign of it in your presence. Never was there suffering equal to mine. I thought you had a deep love for me ; I no longer hid that which I had for you ; and, at a time when I let you see it in its entirety, I learned that you were betraying me, that you loved another, and that to all appearances you were sacrificing me to this new love. I knew this the day of the tilting at the ring—that is why I did not go. I pretended to be ill, to hide the agitation of my mind ; but I became ill indeed, and my body could not bear such violent agitation. When I began to improve, I still pretended to be very ill, so as to have a pretext not to see you and not to write to you. I wished to have time to decide how I should act towards you : I adopted and abandoned, a score of times, the same resolution. But at length I found you unworthy to see my grief, and I decided not to let you see it. I wished to wound your pride by letting you see that my love was dying of its own accord. I thought I was diminishing in this way the value of the sacrifice that you were making of it ; I did not want you to have the pleasure of showing how much I loved you, so as to make yourself appear the more lovable. I decided to write

SECOND PART

you lukewarm and languid letters to make her to whom you would show them think that I was ceasing to love you. I did not wish her to have the pleasure of learning that I knew she was triumphing over me, or to increase her triumph by my despair and my reproaches. I thought that I should not punish you enough by breaking with you, and that I should cause you only slight pain if I ceased to love you when you no longer loved me. I believed it necessary for you to love me still so as to feel the sting of indifference that I felt so cruelly. I believed that if anything could rekindle the feelings that you had had for me, it was to let you see that mine had changed ; but to let you see this while pretending to hide it, and as though I had not the courage to admit it. I adopted this plan ; but with what difficulty !—and, when I saw you again, how impossible it seemed to carry out ! I was on the point, a hundred times, of bursting forth into reproaches and tears. The state in which I was, as regards my health, helped to hide from you my agitation and my grief. I was supported, later, by the pleasure of dissimulating with you, as you did with me ; yet I did myself so much violence to tell you and to write to you that I loved you, that you saw sooner than I intended that my feelings had changed. You were hurt—you complained. I tried to reassure you, but in a manner so

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

strained that you were still more persuaded that I no longer loved you. In short, I did all I had intended to do. Your wayward heart made you turn again towards me, just as far as you saw that I was drawing away from you. I have enjoyed all the pleasures that revenge can give: it seemed to me that you loved me better than you had ever done, and I let you see that I no longer loved you. I had reason to believe that you had entirely abandoned her for whom you had left me. I have had reason to be assured that you have never talked to her about me. But your return and your discretion have not been able to atone for your fickleness—your heart has been divided between me and another. You have deceived me: that suffices to destroy the pleasure of being loved by you, as I believed I deserved to be, and to leave me decided never to see you again—at which you are so surprised."

Madame de Clèves read this letter and re-read it several times, without knowing, however, what she had read. She saw only that Monsieur de Nemours did not love her as she had thought he did, and that he loved others, whom he was deceiving as he had deceived her. What a discovery and what a conviction for a person of her character who was deeply in love, of which she had just given evidence to one whom she considered unworthy of it, and to another whom she used ill because of her

SECOND PART

love ! Never was suffering so poignant and so keen : it seemed to her that the bitterness of her suffering was due to what had happened during that day, and that, if Monsieur de Nemours had not had reason to believe she loved him, she would not have cared about his loving another—but she deceived herself, and the suffering she found so unbearable was jealousy, with all the horrors that accompany it. She saw from the letter that Monsieur de Nemours had a long-standing love-affair. She found that she who had written the letter was clever and worthy ; she appeared to her to deserve to be loved ; she considered that this person had more courage than she had herself, and she envied the strength she had had to hide her feelings from Monsieur de Nemours. She saw from the end of the letter that this person believed she was loved ; she thought that the discretion showed towards her by the Duke, a discretion by which she had been so impressed, was perhaps only the result of the love he had for this other person, whom he feared to hurt—in short, she thought all that could increase her suffering and her despair.

What heart-searchings were hers !—what reflections on the advice her mother had given her ! How she repented of not having insisted on retiring from social life, in spite of Monsieur de Clèves, or of not having carried out the

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

idea she had had of confessing her inclinations towards Monsieur de Nemours ! She was of the opinion that she would have done better to expose her feelings to her husband, whose kindness she knew and whose interest it was to hide them, rather than to let them be seen by a man who was unworthy of them, who fell short of them, sacrificed them, perhaps, and who did not think of being loved by her save from a feeling of pride and vanity. In short, she was of the opinion that all the ills that could befall her, and all the extreme measures she could take, were less than to have let Monsieur de Nemours see that she loved him, and to know that he loved another. Her sole consolation was the thought that, after this discovery, she had nothing to fear from herself, and that she would be completely cured of the inclination she had had for the Duke.

She gave no thought to the orders that the Dauphiness had given her to be present at her couchee. She went to bed, and pretended to be ill ; so that, when Monsieur de Clèves came back from the King's, he was told that she was asleep. But she was far indeed from the peace of mind that leads to sleep. She passed the night in grieving, and in re-reading the letter that had come into her hands.

Madame de Clèves was not the only person whose peace was disturbed by this letter. The Vidame de Chartres, not Monsieur de Nemours,

SECOND PART

had lost it, and was extremely anxious about it. He had passed all the evening at the house of Monsieur de Guise, who had given a big supper-party for his brother-in-law, the Duke of Ferrara, and all the younger set at Court. It so happened that, during supper, the conversation turned on letters of good quality. The Vidame de Chartres said that he had in his pocket one that was more admirable than any that had ever been written. He was urged to show it: he declined. Monsieur de Nemours maintained that he hadn't one, and that he was merely boasting. The Vidame replied that he was pushing his discretion too far, that nevertheless he would not show the letter, but that he would read some passages which would prove that few men received the like. Meanwhile, he felt for the letter and did not find it—he sought it in vain.

They teased him, but he seemed so uneasy that they stopped talking about it. He left before the others, and hurried home to see whether he had left the missing letter there. While he was still looking for it, the chief valet de chambre of the Queen came to tell him that the Viscountess d'Usèz thought he ought to know at once that it was said at the Queen's that a love-letter had fallen from his pocket while he was at the tennis-court, that a great part of its contents had been quoted, that the Queen had been very anxious to see it and had

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

sent to ask for it from one of her gentlemen-in-waiting, but that he had replied that he had left it in the hands of Chastelart.

The chief valet de chambre told the Vidame de Chartres much more that increased his anxiety. He went out at once to a gentleman who was an intimate friend of Chastelart. He called him from his bed, although the hour was late, to go and ask for the letter without saying who was asking for it or who had lost it. Chastelart, who was convinced that it was Monsieur de Nemours', and that the Duke was in love with the Dauphiness, never doubted but that it was he who wanted it back. He replied with malicious joy that he had given the letter to the Dauphiness. The gentleman came back with this reply to the Vidame de Chartres, and it increased the uneasiness he already felt, and added new anxieties. After being undecided for some time as to what he ought to do, he decided that only Monsieur de Nemours could help him out of his difficulties.

He went to see him, and entered his room when day was only just breaking. The Duke was sleeping soundly ; what he had seen the day before on the face of Madame de Clèves gave him none but pleasant thoughts.

He was quite surprised to find himself awakened by the Vidame de Chartres, and asked him whether it was to revenge himself for what

SECOND PART

he had said at supper that he had come to disturb his rest. The Vidame's face showed that the reason for his coming was serious indeed.

“ I have come to confide in you the most important matter in my life ”, said he. “ I know that you are under no obligation to me for this, since I do it because I need your help ; but I well know also that I should have fallen in your esteem had I told you all I am going to tell you without being forced by necessity to do so. I have let fall the letter I was talking about last night : it is of the utmost importance that it should not be known that it was addressed to me. It has been seen by many people who were at the tennis-courts when it fell yesterday ; you were there too, and I beg you as a favour to say that you lost it.”

“ You must think I have no mistress ”, replied Monsieur de Nemours, with a smile, “ that you should make such a proposal, and imagine there is no one with whom I should be on bad terms if I let it be thought that I received such letters.”

“ I beg of you ”, said the Vidame, “ to listen to me seriously. If you have a mistress —and I do not doubt it, though I know not who she is—it will be easy to justify yourself, and I will give you an infallible means of doing so. Even if you did not justify yourself in her eyes, it would cost you only a few

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

moments of misunderstanding ; but I, by this mishap, dishonour a person who has dearly loved me, and who is one of the most estimable women in the world ; and, in addition, I bring down upon myself an implacable hatred that will cost me my career, and perhaps more than that.”

“ I cannot understand the full import of what you say ”, replied Monsieur de Nemours ; “ but you lead me to believe that the rumours that have circulated of the interest a great princess was taking in you were not completely false.”

“ Nor are they ”, replied the Vidame de Chartres. “ Would to God they were ! Then I should not now be in this difficulty. But I must tell you all that has happened, that you may see all I have to fear.

“ Ever since I came to Court, the Queen has always treated me with much distinction and affability, and I had had reason to believe that she looked kindly upon me ; yet there was never anything intimate, and I had never thought of having feelings for her other than those of respect. I was very much in love with Madame de Thémire ; it is easy to understand, at the sight of her, that one can have great love for her, when she loves in return—and she loved me. About two years ago, when the Court was at Fontainebleau, I found myself two or three times in conversation with the

SECOND PART

Queen at moments when few people were present. It seemed to me that my ideas pleased her, and that she was interested in all I said. One day—among others—she began to talk of confidence. I said there was no one in whom I had complete confidence, that I found one always repented of having had it, and that I knew many things of which I had never spoken. The Queen said that she esteemed me the more for this—that she had found no one in France who could keep a secret, and that this was what had most embarrassed her because it had denied her the pleasure of trusting—that it was a necessity in life to have some one to whom one could speak, and especially for people of her rank. Later on, she returned several times to the same subject : she even told me somewhat secret things that were happening. In short, it seemed to me that she wished to assure herself of my discretion, and would like to confide in me. This idea attached me to her ; I was pleased at the honour, and paid court to her with more than my usual assiduity. One evening when the King and all the ladies had gone riding in the forest—where she had not wished to go because she was feeling slightly unwell—I remained with her. She went down to the edge of the pool and dispensed with her equerries in order to walk with greater freedom.

“ After strolling a little, she came towards

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

me and ordered me to follow her. ‘ I want to talk to you ’, she said, ‘ and you will see from what I want to say to you that I am a friend.’

“ She stopped after this, and fixed her eyes on me. ‘ You are in love ’, she went on, ‘ and perhaps because you take no one into your confidence, you think your love is not known ; but it *is* known, and even to the interested persons. You are being watched : the places where you meet your lady are known ; it is the intention to surprise you there. I do not know who she is : I do not ask to know, and I only want to save you from the disaster that might befall you.’

“ Note, I pray, what a trap the Queen was setting for me, and how hard it was not to fall into it. She wanted to know whether I was in love ; and, by not asking for the lady’s name and by showing only the single intention of pleasing me, she avoided the interpretation that she was speaking from curiosity or with ulterior motives.

“ Yet, in spite of appearances, I guessed the truth. I was in love with Madame de Thémire ; but, although she loved me, I was not happy to the point of having private meetings and having cause to fear that I should be caught with her ; so I saw clearly that it could not be to *her* that the Queen was alluding. I well knew, also, that I had an affair with

SECOND PART

another woman less beautiful and less unyielding than Madame de Thémire, and it was not impossible that the place where I saw her had become known ; but, as she meant little to me, it was easy to avoid all danger by ceasing to see her. So, I decided to admit nothing to the Queen, and to assure her, on the contrary, that I had long ago given up the desire of awakening the love of women by whom I might hope to be loved, because I found almost all of them unworthy of retaining a gentleman, and that it would need something much above them to attract me.

“ You are not answering frankly”, replied the Queen. ‘ I know to the contrary of what you tell me. The way in which I have spoken to you should oblige you to hide nothing from me. I want you to be a friend’, she continued, ‘ but I do not want, when giving you this place, to ignore your attachments. See whether you will purchase my friendship at the price of telling me about them. I will give you two days to think it over ; but, at the end of that time, think carefully of what you are saying to me, and remember that if, later, I find you have deceived me, I will not forgive you as long as I live.’

“ Having said this, the Queen left me without waiting for a reply. You may be assured that I remained with my mind full of what

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

she had just said. The two days she had given me to think it over did not seem too long for me to come to a decision. I saw that she wanted to know whether I was in love, and that she did not wish me to be. I saw the results and consequences of the decision at which I was going to arrive. My vanity was not a little flattered by an intimate understanding with a queen, and a queen whose person is still very lovable. On the other hand, I loved Madame de Thémines, and, although I was being unfaithful to her, in a way, with the other woman I have mentioned, I could not bring myself to break with her. I also saw the danger to which I exposed myself by deceiving the Queen, and how difficult it was to deceive her ; yet I could not bring myself to refuse what fortune offered me, and I took the risk of all that my evil conduct could bring down on me. I broke with the woman whose relations with me could be discovered, and I hoped to hide those I had with Madame de Thémines.

“ At the end of the two days the Queen had given me, as I entered the room where all the ladies were at the reception, she said aloud to me, with a seriousness that surprised me : ‘ Have you thought of the matter with which I charged you, and do you know the truth about it ? ’ ‘ Yes, Madame ’, I replied, ‘ and it is as I told Your Majesty.’ ‘ Come to-night,

SECOND PART

at my writing-time', she replied, 'and I will give you further orders.' I made a low bow, without saying anything, and did not fail to attend at the time she had indicated. I found her in the hall with her secretary and one of her ladies.

"As soon as she saw me, she came to me and led me to the other end of the hall. 'Well', she said, 'is it after due thought that you have nothing to say to me, and does not the way I treat you merit your speaking frankly to me?'

"'It is because I am speaking sincerely to you, Madame', I replied, 'that I have nothing to tell you, and I swear to Your Majesty, with all the respect I owe, that I have no attachment to any lady at Court.'

"'I will believe it', replied the Queen, 'because that is what I wish, and I wish it because I want you to be completely attached to me, and because it would be impossible for me to be satisfied by your friendship if you were in love. People who are, cannot be trusted—one cannot be sure of their discretion. They are too absent-minded and too absorbed, and their mistress has a first call on them that could not harmonize with the way I want you to be attached to me. Remember, then, that it is upon your word that I choose to give you my whole confidence. Remember that I want yours completely, that I want you to have

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

neither man nor woman friend except those who are approved by me, and to abandon every thought except that of pleasing me. Your career shall not suffer. I will further your interests with more energy than you would yourself ; and, whatever I do for you, I shall consider myself more than rewarded if I find that you are for me such as I hope. I choose you to confide in you all my troubles, and to help me relieve them. You can imagine they are not light. I submit apparently without much suffering to the King's attachment for the Duchess of Valentinois, but it is unbearable to me. She controls the King ; she is unfaithful to him ; she scorns me ; all my servitors are on her side. The Queen, my daughter-in-law, proud of her beauty and of her uncles' standing, pays me no respect. The Connétable de Montmorency is master of the King and of the kingdom ; he hates me, and has shown his hatred in a way I shall not forget. Marshal de Saint-André is a young and bold favourite who treats me no better than the others do. The details of my misfortune would call forth your pity. Until now, I have not dared to trust anyone ; I trust you ; act so that I shall not regret it, and be my sole consolation.'

“ The Queen's eyes reddened as she stopped speaking ; I almost threw myself at her feet, so deeply touched was I by the kindness she

SECOND PART

showed me. From that day she had complete confidence in me ; she no longer did anything without speaking about it to me, and I have maintained between us an understanding that still continues.”

THIRD PART

“MEANWHILE, however absorbed and occupied I was by this new understanding with the Queen, I was attached to Madame de Thémines by an affection I could not overcome. It seemed to me that she was ceasing to love me ; and, instead of using the apparent change in her to help me cure myself—as I should have done had I been wise—I allowed it to increase my love, and I behaved so unwisely that the Queen had some knowledge of this attachment. Jealousy is natural to persons of her race, and perhaps this princess has for me feelings deeper than she herself thinks. Be that as it may, the rumour that I was in love caused her so much uneasiness and so much chagrin that I thought a hundred times I was undone. I reassured her at length by dint of attentions, submission, and false oaths ; but I should not have been able to deceive her long if the change in Madame de Thémines had not separated me from her in spite of myself. She let me see that she no longer loved me, and I was so convinced of this that I was forced not to torment

THIRD PART

her further and to leave her in peace. A short time after, she wrote me the letter which I have lost. I learned from it that she had known of the relations I had had with the other lady I mentioned, and that this was the cause of her change. As I had no longer anything to distract my attention, the Queen was fairly satisfied with me ; but, as the feelings I have for her are not of a nature to make me incapable of all other attachments, and as one does not love by an effort of the will, I fell in love with Madame de Martigues, for whom I had already had much inclination when she was Villemontais, maid-of-honour to the Dauphiness. I have reason to believe that she is not averse to me : the discretion I have shown, for which she does not know all the reasons, pleases her.

“ As far as Madame de Martigues is concerned, the Queen has no suspicion—but she has a suspicion, no less regrettable, of some one else. As Madame de Martigues is always at the Dauphiness’, I go there more often than usual. The Queen has come to think that it is with this princess that I am in love. The rank of the Dauphiness—which is equal to her own—and her beauty and youth, which are superior, cause the Queen a jealousy that does not fall short of fury and a hatred she can no longer hide. Cardinal de Lorraine, who has appeared to me for some time to be aspiring

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

to the Queen's favours, and who sees clearly that I occupy a place he would like to fill, uses the pretext of reconciling the Dauphiness with her to interest himself in their quarrels. I have no doubt he has guessed the real cause of the Queen's bitterness, and I think he does me many a bad turn, without letting her see that his intention is to do so. That is the present state of affairs. Judge the effect that would be produced by the letter I have lost, which I was unlucky enough to put in my pocket to return to Madame de Thémire. If the Queen sees this letter, she will know that I have deceived her, and that, almost at the very time I am deceiving her for Madame de Thémire, I am unfaithful to Madame de Thémire for another woman—judge what an opinion that would give of me, and whether she could ever trust my word ! If she does not see this letter, what can I say to her ? She knows that it has been given to the Dauphiness. She will believe that Chastelart recognized the Dauphiness' writing, and that the letter is from her. She will think that the person towards whom jealousy was shown is perhaps herself—in short, there is nothing she may not think, and nothing I may not fear from her thoughts. Add to that the fact that I am very much in love with Madame de Martigues, and that the Dauphiness will surely show her this letter, which she will think has been written

THIRD PART

recently. Thus I shall be on bad terms both with the person I love most in the world and with the person I ought most to fear. Think, after that, whether I have not reason to beg you to say that the letter is yours, and to ask you as a favour to get it from the Dauphiness."

"I quite see", said Monsieur de Nemours, "that no one can be in greater trouble than you are; and it must be admitted that you deserve it. I have been accused of not being a faithful lover, and of having several affairs at the same time; but you so far surpass me that I could not even think of the things you have undertaken. Could you expect to keep Madame de Thémire when you pledged yourself to the Queen, and did you hope to pledge yourself to the Queen and be able to deceive her? She is Italian and a queen, and therefore suspicious, jealous, and proud. When your good luck, rather than your good behaviour, relieved you of the engagements into which you had entered, you undertook new ones, and you imagined that, in the midst of the Court, you could love Madame de Martigues without the Queen's finding this out. You could not have taken too much care to spare her the shame of having made the first advances. She has a violent love for you. Your discretion prevents your telling me so, and mine prevents my inquiring about it; but, for all

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

that, she loves you ; she is suspicious ; and the facts are against you.”

“ Is it for you to overcome me with reprimands ? ” interrupted the Vidame ; “ and should not your experience make you indulgent towards my misdeeds ? I am, however, ready to admit that I was wrong ; but I beg of you think of a way to get me out of the dilemma I am in. It seems to me that you ought to see the Dauphiness as soon as she awakens, to ask for the letter back, as though you had lost it.”

“ I have already said ”, replied Monsieur de Nemours, “ that the proposal you make is somewhat unusual, and that my private interests might cause me to find difficulties in the way ; and, moreover, if this letter was seen to fall from your pocket, it seems to me difficult to persuade people that it fell from mine.”

“ I thought I had said ”, replied the Vidame, “ that the Dauphiness was told that it was from your pocket it fell.”

“ What ! ” said Monsieur de Nemours sharply, seeing then the harm this mistake could do him in the eyes of Madame de Clèves, “ the Dauphiness has been told that it was I who dropped the letter ? ”

“ Yes ”, replied the Vidame, “ she was told so, and the cause of the mistake was that there were several of the Queen’s gentlemen-in-waiting in one of the rooms at the tennis-

THIRD PART

courts where we put our clothes, and where your men and mine went for them. At this moment the letter fell: these gentlemen picked it up and read it aloud. Some thought it was yours—others, mine. Chastelart, who took it and whom I have just asked for it, said that he had given it to the Dauphiness as a letter belonging to you, and those who have talked about it to the Queen have said, unfortunately, that it was mine. So you can easily do what I wish and free me from the embarrassment in which I am.”

Monsieur de Nemours had always been very fond of the Vidame de Chartres, and the latter's relationship to Madame de Clèves made him still dearer to him. Yet he could not consent to take the risk of her hearing of this letter as a thing in which he was concerned. He began to ponder, and the Vidame, guessing fairly well the subject of his meditation, said: “I think you fear to get into trouble with your lady, and you would even give me reason to believe that she is the Dauphiness, if the little jealousy that I see you show towards Monsieur d'Anville did not dispel this illusion; but, however things may be, it is just that you should not sacrifice your peace of mind for mine, and I am willing to give you the means of showing her whom you love that this letter is addressed to me and not to you. Here is a note from Madame d'Amboise, who is a friend

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

of Madame de Thémines and the confidante of all the feelings she has had for me. In this note she asks for the return of her friend's letter which I have lost. My name is in the note, and its contents prove beyond any doubt that the letter I am asked to return is the one that has been found. I leave this note in your hands, and I consent to your showing it to your lady to justify yourself. I beg of you not to lose a moment, and to go this very morning to the Dauphiness."

Monsieur de Nemours promised the Vidame de Chartres to do so, and took Madame d'Amboise's note; yet his intention was not to see the Dauphiness, as he considered that there was something more urgent. He did not doubt that she had already spoken of the letter to Madame de Clèves, and he could not bear that one whom he loved so ardently should have reason to believe that he had an attachment for another.

He waited upon her as soon as he thought she would be awake, and sent in word that he would not ask to have the honour of seeing her at such an unusual hour if a matter of great importance did not require it. Madame de Clèves was still in bed, her mind embittered and troubled by the sad thoughts she had had during the night. She was extremely surprised when she was told that Monsieur de Nemours was asking for her. Her embitterment made

THIRD PART

her reply without hesitation that she was ill, and could not speak to him.

The Duke was not offended by this refusal—a sign of coldness at a time when she might be jealous was not an ill omen. He went to Monsieur de Clèves' apartment, and told him that he had just come from his wife's; that he was very sorry he could not see her, because he had to talk to her of a matter that was important for the Vidame de Chartres. He informed Monsieur de Clèves in a few words of the importance of this matter, and Monsieur de Clèves took him at once to his wife's room. If her face had not been in shadow, she would have had difficulty in hiding her agitation and her astonishment on seeing Monsieur de Nemours come in accompanied by her husband. Monsieur de Clèves told her that her help was needed in the interest of the Vidame in connection with a letter; that she would consider with Monsieur de Nemours what was to be done, and that he was going to the King, who had just sent for him.

Monsieur de Nemours remained alone with Madame de Clèves, as he had often wished to be. “I have come to ask you, Madame”, said he, “whether the Dauphiness has not spoken to you of a letter that Chastelart gave her yesterday.”

“She said something about it”, replied Madame de Clèves, “but I do not see what

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

that letter has in common with my uncle's interests and I can assure you that he is not mentioned in it."

"It is true, Madame", replied Monsieur de Nemours, "that he is not mentioned in it, yet it is addressed to him, and it is very important for him that you should get it back from the Dauphiness."

"I fail to understand", replied Madame de Clèves, "why it is important for him that this letter should not be seen, and why it must be asked for in his name."

"If you will take the time to listen to me, Madame", said Monsieur de Nemours, "I will soon show you the truth, and you will learn things so important for the Vidame that I should not even have confided them to Monsieur de Clèves had I not needed his help to have the honour of seeing you."

"I think that all you would take the trouble of telling me would be useless", replied Madame de Clèves, in a rather sharp tone; "and it would be better for you to go to the Dauphiness, without beating about the bush, and tell her the interest you have in the letter, since she has been told that it is yours."

The bitterness that Monsieur de Nemours perceived in Madame de Clèves' mind gave him the keenest pleasure he had ever felt, and compensated for his impatience to justify himself. "I do not know, Madame", he replied,

THIRD PART

“ what may have been said to the Dauphiness, but I have no interest in the letter, and it is addressed to the Vidame.”

“ I believe so ”, replied Madame de Clèves ; “ but the Dauphiness has been told the contrary, and it will not seem probable to her that the Vidame’s letters should fall from your pockets ; that is why, unless you have some reason unknown to me for hiding the truth from the Dauphiness, I advise you to confess it to her.”

“ I have nothing to confess ”, he replied. “ The letter is not mine, and, if there is a person that I want to persuade of this, it is not the Dauphiness ; but, Madame, as the Vidame’s career depends on it, allow me to tell you things that are worthy even of your interest.”

Madame de Clèves showed by her silence that she was ready to listen to him, and Monsieur de Nemours told her as briefly as possible all he had learned from the Vidame. Although they were things such as would cause astonishment and be listened to with attention, Madame de Clèves heard them with such great coldness that it appeared as though she did not believe them, or that they were of no interest to her. Her attitude remained the same until Monsieur de Nemours spoke to her of Madame d’Amboise’s note, which was addressed to the Vidame de Chartres and which constituted a proof of all he had just said. As Madame de Clèves

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

knew that this person was a friend of Madame de Thémines', she found an appearance of truth in what Monsieur de Nemours said, which made her think that the letter was perhaps not addressed to him. This thought dispelled at once, and in spite of herself, the coldness she had hitherto shown. The Duke, after having read to her the note that justified him, gave it to her to read, saying that she could recognize the writing. She could not refrain from taking it, looking at the top to see whether it was addressed to the Vidame de Chartres, and reading it right through to judge whether the letter that it asked for was the one she had in her possession. Monsieur de Nemours said further all he thought likely to convince her, and, as one is easily convinced of an agreeable truth, he persuaded Madame de Clèves that this letter did not concern him.

She then began to discuss with him the difficulties and perils which surrounded the Vidame, to criticize his misdeeds, and to seek means of helping him. She expressed astonishment at the Queen's conduct; she admitted to Monsieur de Nemours that she had the letter—in short, as soon as she believed him innocent, she was interested with an open and calm mind in the very things to which she seemed at first not to deign to listen. They agreed that the letter must not be returned to the Dauphiness, for fear she might show it to

THIRD PART

Madame de Martigues, who knew Madame de Thémire's writing and who would easily have guessed, as she was interested in the Vidame, that it was addressed to him. They also came to the conclusion that they must not tell the Dauphiness all about her mother-in-law, the Queen. Madame de Clèves, on the pretext of her uncle's affairs, gladly undertook to keep all the secrets that Monsieur de Nemours entrusted to her.

The Duke would not have confined himself to the Vidame's interests, and the opportunity he had found to talk to her would have made him bolder than he had yet dared to be, if word had not been brought to Madame de Clèves that the Dauphiness had sent for her. Monsieur de Nemours was obliged to leave. He went to see the Vidame, to tell him that, after he had left him, he had thought it better to bring in Madame de Clèves, as she was his niece, rather than to go direct to the Dauphiness. He was not short of reasons to justify what he had done and to make success seem probable.

Meanwhile, Madame de Clèves dressed in haste to go to the Dauphiness'. She had scarcely entered the room when the Princess called her, and said in a low voice: "I have been waiting for you two hours, and I have never had more difficulty in concealing the truth than I have had this morning. The Queen

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

has heard about the letter I gave you yesterday : she thinks that it was the Vidame de Chartres who dropped it—you know she is somewhat interested in him. She sent for the letter ; Chastelart was asked for it ; he said he had given it to me ; I was asked for it under the pretext that it was a clever letter that aroused the Queen's curiosity. I did not dare say you had it ; I thought she would conclude I had given it to you because the Vidame is your uncle, and that he and I were on very good terms. It had already occurred to me that she bore with difficulty his seeing me often ; so I said that the letter was in the clothes I wore yesterday, and that those who had the keys of my wardrobe had gone out. Give me the letter at once ", she added, " so that I can send it to her, and so that I can read it before I send it, to see whether I know the writing."

Madame de Clèves was even more embarrassed than she had expected. " I do not know, Madame, what you will do ", she replied, " for Monsieur de Clèves, to whom I had given it to read, gave it back to Monsieur de Nemours, who came early this morning to beg him to ask you for it back. Monsieur de Clèves was imprudent enough to say he had it, and weak enough to yield to Monsieur de Nemours' entreaties for its return."

" You put me in the greatest possible

THIRD PART

difficulties", replied the Dauphiness, "and you did wrong to return the letter to Monsieur de Nemours, since it was I who gave it to you ; you ought not to have mentioned it without my permission. What can I say to the Queen, and what will she think ? She will believe, and on good grounds, that this letter concerns me, and that there is something between the Vidame and me. She will never believe that the letter belongs to Monsieur de Nemours."

"I am extremely sorry", replied Madame de Clèves, "for the trouble I have caused you. I see just how great it is, but the fault is Monsieur de Clèves', not mine."

"It is your fault", retorted the Dauphiness, "that you gave him the letter, and you are the only woman in the world who tells her husband all she knows."

"I am convinced I did wrong, Madame", said Madame de Clèves, "but think of arranging the matter, instead of discussing my culpability."

"Don't you remember fairly well what was in the letter ?" then asked the Dauphiness.

"Yes, Madame", was the reply, "I remember it, having read it over more than once."

"In that case", said the Dauphiness, "you must go at once and have it written in an unknown hand. I will send it to the Queen. She will not show it to those who have seen the letter. Even if she did, I should always

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

maintain that it is the one Chastelart gave me, and he would not dare to deny it."

Madame de Clèves adopted this way out, and the more readily because she thought she would send for Monsieur de Nemours, get back the original letter so as to copy it word for word, and have the writing closely imitated ; and she believed the Queen would thus be inevitably deceived. As soon as she got home, she told her husband the trouble the Dauphiness was in, and asked him to send for Monsieur de Nemours. He was sent for and came at once. Madame de Clèves told him all that she had related to her husband, and asked him for the letter ; but Monsieur de Nemours replied that he had already returned it to the Vidame de Chartres, who was so glad to have it back and to find himself out of the danger to which he had been exposed that he had sent it back at once to Madame de Thémire's friend. Madame de Clèves was faced with a new difficulty, and, finally, after long consultation, they decided to reproduce the letter from memory. They shut themselves up to work on it ; orders were given that no one was to enter, and all Monsieur de Nemours' servants were sent home. The resulting atmosphere of mystery and confidence was no ordinary delight for the Duke, or even for Madame de Clèves. Her husband's presence and the Vidame de Chartres' interests overcame, to

THIRD PART

some extent, her scruples ; she was conscious only of the pleasure of seeing Monsieur de Nemours ; she felt a complete and unmixed joy that was new to her. This joy gave her an ease and liveliness of mind that Monsieur de Nemours had never seen in her, and it increased his love twofold. As he had not yet had such pleasant moments, his own spirits rose ; and, when Madame de Clèves wanted to begin to recall the letter and to write it, the Duke, instead of helping her seriously, did nothing but interrupt her and say amusing things. Madame de Clèves became equally gay, so that they had been long shut up together, and two messages had come from the Dauphiness urging Madame de Clèves to make haste, before half the letter was written.

Monsieur de Nemours was only too glad to prolong an interview that was so pleasant, and he forgot the interests of his friend. Madame de Clèves did not find the time drag, and she also forgot her uncle's interests. It was fully four o'clock before the letter was finished. It was so badly done, and the handwriting used in the copy resembled so little the hand they had intended to imitate, that the Queen would have had to be careless indeed not to find out the truth—so she was not deceived by it. In spite of the efforts made to persuade her that this letter was written to Monsieur de Nemours, she remained

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

convinced not only that it belonged to the Vidame de Chartres but also that the Dauphiness had something to do with it, and that there was some understanding between them. This idea so intensified her hatred of this princess that she never forgave her, and she persecuted her until she had driven her from France.

As for the Vidame de Chartres, he was ruined so far as she was concerned ; and, whether it was that Cardinal de Lorraine had already gained an ascendancy over her or whether the incident of the letter, that showed her she was being deceived, helped her to detect the other deceptions that the Vidame had already practised, certain it is that he was never able really to reconcile her. Their intimacy ceased, and she brought about his downfall later, at the time of the Amboise conspiracy, in which he was implicated.

When the letter had been sent to the Dauphiness, Monsieur de Clèves and Monsieur de Nemours went away. Madame de Clèves remained alone ; and, as soon as she was no longer buoyed up by the joy that comes from the presence of the loved one, she awakened as from a dream. She considered with amazement the huge difference between the state she had been in the previous evening and the one in which she now found herself. She called to mind the bitterness and the coldness

THIRD PART

she had shown towards Monsieur de Nemours as long as she thought the letter from Madame de Thémines was written to him, what peace and happiness had taken the place of this bitterness as soon as he had convinced her that the letter did not concern him. When she thought that the day before she had reproached herself, as for a crime, for having given him evidence of feelings that compassion alone might have engendered, and that by her ill-humour she had shown him jealousy that was a sure proof of love, she no longer recognized herself. When she thought, moreover, that Monsieur de Nemours saw clearly that she knew of his love, that he saw clearly that in spite of this knowledge she did not treat him more harshly even in the presence of her husband, that, on the contrary, she had never looked upon him so favourably; that she had been responsible for Monsieur de Clèves' having sent for him, and that they had just passed the afternoon together in private, she came to the conclusion that she was an accomplice of Monsieur de Nemours, that she was betraying a husband who deserved less to be betrayed than any husband in the world, and she was ashamed to appear so unworthy of esteem, even in the eyes of her lover. But what she found harder to bear than all the rest was the remembrance of the state in which she had passed the night, and the acute

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

suffering that had been caused her by the thought that Monsieur de Nemours loved another, and that she had been deserted.

She had not known until then the cruel tortures of mistrust and jealousy: she had thought only of preventing herself from falling in love with Monsieur de Nemours, and had not yet begun to fear that he loved another. Although her suspicions caused by the letter were dispelled, they opened her eyes, nevertheless, to the danger of being deserted, and gave rise to feelings of mistrust and jealousy that were entirely new to her. She was astonished that she had not thought sooner how little probability there was that a man like Monsieur de Nemours, who had always shown such fickleness towards women, should be capable of a sincere and lasting devotion. She considered it almost impossible for her to be contented with his love. "And even if I could", said she, "what do I mean to do with it? Do I mean to tolerate it? To respond to it? Do I mean to begin a love-affair? To be remiss towards Monsieur de Clèves? To be remiss towards my very self? And do I mean, in short, to expose myself to the cruel repentance and to the mortal anguish that come from love? I am vanquished and dominated by a passion that bears me on in spite of myself—all my resolutions are unavailing. I thought yesterday all that I think to-day, and I am

THIRD PART

doing to-day exactly the contrary of what I decided to do yesterday. I must tear myself away from the society of Monsieur de Nemours : I must go away to the country—however strange my departure may seem ; and, if Monsieur de Clèves insists on preventing it or on knowing the reasons for it, perhaps I shall make him suffer, and myself also, by telling them to him.”

Her mind was made up, and she passed the whole evening at home, without going to learn from the Dauphiness what had happened concerning the copy of the Vidame’s letter.

When Monsieur de Clèves came home, she told him she wanted to go to the country, that she was not feeling well and needed the open air. Monsieur de Clèves, who found her looking so beautiful that he was not convinced her indisposition was serious, laughed at first at the proposed journey, and told her she was forgetting that the Princesses’ weddings and the tournament were coming, and that she had not too much time left to get ready to appear at these with the same magnificence as the other ladies. Her husband’s argument did not make her change her mind ; she begged that, while he went to Compiègne with the King, he would consent to her going to Coulommiers, a fine house a day’s journey from Paris that they were having built with great care. Monsieur de Clèves consented to

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

this. She went there with the intention of not returning for some time, and the King left for Compiègne, where he was to spend a few days only.

Monsieur de Nemours was very unhappy because he had not seen Madame de Clèves since the afternoon that he had passed so pleasantly with her, and that had so raised his hopes. His impatience to see her again gave him no rest, so that, when the King returned to Paris, he decided to go to see his sister, the Duchess of Mercœur, who lived in the country not far from Coulommiers. He invited the Vidame to go with him, and the invitation was readily accepted. Monsieur de Nemours had made it in the hope of seeing Madame de Clèves, and of visiting her in company with the Vidame.

Madame de Mercœur was delighted to see them, and made it her sole care to entertain them and to provide them with all the pleasures of the country. While they were stag-hunting one day, Monsieur de Nemours lost his way in the forest. When he asked what road he should take to get home, he learned that he was near Coulommiers. At the mention of the word "Coulommiers", without reflection and without any definite plan he galloped in the direction indicated. He entered the forest and followed blindly well-kept roads that he thought would lead to the house. At the end

THIRD PART

of one of these roads he found a summer-house, the ground-floor of which consisted of a large room and two small ones—one opening on a flower-garden that was separated from the forest only by a fence, and the other opening on a main walk of the park. He entered the summer-house, and would have stopped to admire it had he not seen, coming along the walk in the park, Monsieur and Madame de Clèves, followed by a number of servants. As he had not expected to find Monsieur de Clèves, whom he had left with the King, his first impulse was to hide. He went into the smaller room that opened on the flower-garden, with the intention of escaping by a door that led into the forest ; but, when he saw that Madame de Clèves and her husband had sat down in the summer-house, and that their servants stayed in the park and could not reach him without going through the room in which Monsieur and Madame de Clèves were sitting, he could not deny himself the pleasure of looking at the Princess or overcome his desire to listen to her conversation with a husband of whom he was more jealous than of any of his rivals.

He heard Monsieur de Clèves say to his wife : “ But why don’t you wish to return to Paris ? Whoever is keeping you in the country ? You have recently had a taste for solitude that surprises me, and that pains me because it

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

keeps us apart. I find you in lower spirits even than usual, and I am afraid something is worrying you."

"I have nothing on my mind", she replied, with some embarrassment; "but the bustle of the Court is so great and there are always so many people at our house that it is impossible for mind and body not to tire and to seek rest."

"Rest", he answered, "is scarcely suited to a person of your age. Your position at home and at Court is such that you are spared fatigue, and I am rather inclined to fear that you are glad to be away from me."

"You would do me great injustice if you thought that", she replied, with increasing embarrassment; "but I beg you to leave me here. If you could stay too, I should be delighted, provided that you would stay alone, and would consent not to have with you the throng of people who scarcely ever leave you."

"Ah, Madame", exclaimed Monsieur de Clèves, "your looks and your words show me that you have reasons unknown to me for wishing to be alone, and I beg you to tell me of them."

For some time he urged her to tell him—but without success; and, after she had resisted his pleadings in a way that increased still further her husband's curiosity, she remained silent, with eyes cast down: then, suddenly, raising her eyes to his, she burst forth: "Do

THIRD PART

not force me ", said she, " to confess something I have not strength to confess, although I have several times intended to do so. Only remember that it is contrary to prudence for a woman of my age, mistress of her actions, to be exposed to the dangers of the Court."

" What do you suggest to my mind, Madame ? " cried Monsieur de Clèves. " I do not dare say it for fear of offending you."

Madame de Clèves did not reply, and her silence confirmed what her husband had in mind.

" You do not reply ", he continued, " and that means I am not mistaken."

" Then, sir ", she answered, falling at his feet, " I am going to make a confession such as was never made to a husband ; but the innocence of my actions and of my intentions gives me the necessary strength. It is true that I have reasons for keeping away from Court, and that I wish to avoid the perils that sometimes beset women of my age. I have never given the least sign of weakness, and I should not fear that I might do so, if you allowed me to withdraw from Court or if I still had Madame de Chartres to help me and guide me. However dangerous may be the course I am now taking, I am taking it gladly to keep me worthy of you. I beg you earnestly to pardon me if I have feelings that grieve you ; at any rate, I shall never grieve

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

you by my actions. Remember that to do what I am doing requires more affection and more esteem for a husband than anyone has ever had. Guide me, pity me, and love me still—if you can."

Monsieur de Clèves had remained during the whole of this confession with his head buried in his hands, beside himself, not thinking even of bidding his wife to rise.

When she ceased speaking, when his eyes fell on her and he saw her at his feet, her face wet with tears and bewitching in its beauty, he thought he should die of grief. Kissing her, and helping her to her feet, he said :

" Madame, have pity on me also. I deserve it, and forgive me if, in the first moments of a grief as poignant as mine, I do not respond as I ought to what you have just done. You appear to me more worthy of esteem and admiration than any woman who ever lived, but yet I regard myself as the unhappiest man that ever was. You awoke love in me the first time I saw you. Neither your early indifference nor marital relations have been able to cool this love. It still endures. But I have never been able to awaken love in you, and I see that you fear you love another. And who, Madame, is the happy man who gives rise to this fear? How long has he attracted you? How did he attract you? How did he find the way to your heart? I consoled myself to some

THIRD PART

extent for not having touched it by the thought that it could not be moved. Meanwhile another has done what I could not do. I have at once the jealousy of a husband and of a lover, but it is impossible to entertain that of a husband after what you have just done. That is too noble not to bring complete peace of mind. It consoles me even as your lover. The confidence and the sincerity that you have shown me are above all price. You esteem me enough to believe that I shall not take an unfair advantage of this confession. You are right, Madame : I shall not do so, and I shall love you no less because of it. You destroy my happiness by the greatest proof of fidelity that a woman ever gave her husband ; but, Madame, go on and tell me who it is you wish to avoid."

"I entreat you not to ask me that", she replied ; "I am determined not to tell you, and I think that prudence requires me not to do so."

"Have no fear, Madame", said Monsieur de Clèves ; "I know too much of life to be ignorant of the fact that appreciation of the husband does not prevent a man from falling in love with the wife. He ought to hate those who do so, but not complain. So once more, Madame, I beg of you to tell me what I want to know."

"You would insist in vain", she replied.

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

“ I have strength enough to keep secret what I think I ought not to divulge. My confession to you was not the result of weakness ; and it needs more courage to confess such things than to undertake to hide them.”

Monsieur de Nemours had not missed a word of this conversation, and what Madame de Clèves had just said made him scarcely less jealous than her husband. He was so madly in love with her that he thought every one else had similar feelings. It was actually true that he had several rivals, but he imagined he had still more, and he racked his brains to find out which of them Madame de Clèves meant. He had often thought that she did not dislike him, but he had formed this opinion from things that now seemed to him so slight that he could not imagine he had kindled a love so violent that it called for such a drastic remedy. He was so excited that he could scarcely believe his eyes, and he could not forgive Monsieur de Clèves for not insisting on knowing the name his wife was hiding.

Monsieur de Clèves, however, was doing his best to find it out ; and, after he had insisted in vain, his wife said : “ It seems to me that you ought to be satisfied with my candour ; do not ask me anything more, and do not give me cause to regret what I have just done. Content yourself with the further assurance I give you that no action of mine has betrayed my

THIRD PART

feelings, and that not a word has been said to me at which I could take offence."

"Oh, Madame", Monsieur de Clèves suddenly exclaimed, "I cannot believe you. I remember your embarrassment the day your portrait was lost. You gave it away, Madame—you gave away the portrait that was so dear to me, and that was so rightly mine. You could not hide your feelings—you love—and your lover knows it—your virtue has so far preserved you from anything more."

"Is it possible", cried the Princess, "that you can imagine there is any deception in a confession like mine, which I was not obliged to make? Believe what I say. I am paying dearly for the confidence that I ask of you. Believe, I implore you, that I did not give away my portrait—it is true that I saw it taken, but I did not wish to appear to see it for fear of exposing myself to hearing things that he has not yet dared to say."

"How, then, did he show you that he loved you?" asked Monsieur de Clèves; "and what indication of love did he give you?"

"Spare me the ordeal", she replied, "of relating details that I am ashamed to have noticed, and that convinced me only too completely of my weakness."

"You are right, Madame", he said. "I am unjust. Refuse to answer whenever I ask you such questions; yet do not be angry if I ask them."

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

At this moment some of their servants who had stayed in the garden came to tell Monsieur de Clèves that a gentleman had just come for him from the King to command him to be that evening in Paris. Monsieur de Clèves was obliged to leave, and could say nothing to his wife except to beg her to come the next day, and to entreat her to believe that, while he was sorely distressed, he had an affection and esteem for her that ought to satisfy her.

When he had gone, and Madame de Clèves was alone and considered what she had just done, she was so terrified that she could scarcely believe it was true. She thought she had destroyed her husband's love and esteem, and that she had dug for herself a pit from which escape was impossible. She asked herself why she had done such a dangerous thing, and she saw that she had undertaken it almost in spite of herself. The strangeness of such a confession—for which she knew no precedent—convinced her of its danger. But, when she began to think that this remedy—drastic as it was—was the only one that could protect her against Monsieur de Nemours, she felt that she should not regret it, and that she had not risked too much. She passed the night a prey to uncertainty, anxiety, and fear ; but at last calm returned to her mind : she even found some consolation in having given this proof of fidelity to a husband who deserved it

THIRD PART

so much, who had such esteem and affection for her, and who had just given further evidence of this regard by the way he had received her confession.

Meanwhile Monsieur de Nemours had left the place where he had heard a conversation that concerned him so closely, and had plunged into the forest. What Madame de Clèves had said about her portrait gave him new life by showing him that it was he for whom she cared. At once he gave himself up to this joy—but not for long; for he reflected that the event which had just shown him that he had touched Madame de Clèves' heart ought to convince him also that he would never receive any token of her love, and that it was impossible to bring to terms a person who resorted to such a drastic remedy. He felt, nevertheless, keen pleasure in having reduced her to this extremity. He felt pride in having awakened the love of a woman so different from all others of the sex—in short, he was at once vastly happy and vastly unhappy. Night overtook him in the forest, and he found his way back to Madame de Mercœur's with considerable difficulty. He arrived at daybreak, and had some trouble in explaining what had detained him. He got out of it as best he could, returning to Paris that same day with the Vidame.

Monsieur de Nemours was so full of his love, and so surprised at what he had heard, that he

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

was guilty of a rather common imprudence—that of speaking in general terms of one's personal feelings, and of relating one's own experiences with fictitious names. On the way back, he turned the conversation to love ; he exaggerated the pleasure of being in love with a worthy woman ; he spoke of the singular effects of this passion ; and, finally, not being able to keep to himself his astonishment at what Madame de Clèves had done, he told the story to the Vidame without naming her, and without saying that he had any part in it, but told it with such warmth and admiration that the Vidame naturally suspected that the story concerned the Duke himself. He urged him strongly to admit this. He told him he had known for some time that he was deeply in love, and that it was unfair not to trust a man who had confided in him the secret of his life.

Monsieur de Nemours was too much in love to confess it. He had always hidden it from the Vidame, although he loved him more than any other man at Court. He answered that one of his friends had told him this experience, and had made him promise not to speak of it, and that he begged him also to keep it secret. The Vidame assured him that he would not repeat it : nevertheless Monsieur de Nemours regretted that he had told him so much.

THIRD PART

Meanwhile, Monsieur de Clèves had gone to the King, his heart heavy with mortal grief. Never had a husband loved his wife so passionately or had such esteem for her. What he had just learned had not destroyed his esteem, but had made it something different from what he had hitherto felt. What was uppermost in his thoughts was the desire to discover who had succeeded in attracting her. Monsieur de Nemours came first to his mind as the most attractive man at Court, and the Chevalier de Guise and Marshal de Saint-André as two men who had been her suitors and who still paid her much attention ; so that he finally decided that it must be one of these three. He arrived at the Louvre, and the King took him into his private room to tell him that he had chosen him to accompany Madame to Spain ; that he felt sure no one would discharge this duty better than he ; and that no one would bring as much credit to France as Madame de Clèves.

Monsieur de Clèves accepted this flattering appointment with due appreciation, and even looked upon it as something that would take his wife away from Court without any change in her conduct being noticed ; but the date of their departure was still too remote to remove his present difficulties. He wrote at once to Madame de Clèves, to tell her what the King had just said, and informed her also

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

that he absolutely insisted on her return to Paris. She returned, as he wished ; and, when they met, they were both still extremely sad.

Monsieur de Clèves' conduct showed his perfect chivalry, and how entirely worthy he was of what she had done. "I have no uneasiness concerning you", he said. "You are stronger and more virtuous than you think ; so it is not dread of the future that distresses me. I am only distressed at seeing you feel for another what I have not been able to inspire in you."

"I do not know what to say", she replied. "I am overcome with shame when I speak to you about this matter. Spare me, I implore you, such painful conversations. Control my actions ; see to it that I meet no one—that is all I ask ; but consent to my not speaking again to you of a matter that makes me appear so unworthy of you, and that I consider so unworthy of me."

"You are right, Madame", he answered. "I am taking an unfair advantage of your gentleness and of your confidence. But do you, too, have some compassion for the state into which you have thrown me, and remember that, whatever you have told me, you are concealing a name that excites in me an unbearable curiosity. While I do not ask you to satisfy it, I cannot refrain from telling you that I think the man I must envy is Marshal

THIRD PART

de Saint-André, the Duke of Nemours, or the Chevalier de Guise."

"I shall not reply to that", she said, blushing, "and I shall not, by my replies, either allay or strengthen your suspicions; but, if you try to find out by watching me, you will cause me an embarrassment that will be seen by everybody. In Heaven's name", she went on, "allow me to pretend an illness so that I may see no one."

"No, Madame", he replied; "the pretence would soon be found out; and, moreover, I want to put my trust in you alone—that is the course my heart counsels, and reason dictates the same. With your character, by giving you your liberty, I am prescribing for you narrower limits than *I* could fix."

Monsieur de Clèves was not mistaken: the confidence he showed in his wife strengthened her position as regards Monsieur de Nemours, and caused her to make more severe resolutions than any constraint could have done. She went to the Louvre, therefore, and to the apartments of the Dauphiness as she had been wont, but she avoided the company and the glances of Monsieur de Nemours with such care that she almost deprived him of all his pleasure at the thought of being loved by her. He saw nothing in her actions that did not convince him of the contrary. He scarcely knew whether what he had heard was not a

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

dream, so little probability could he find in it. The only assurance he had that he was not mistaken was Madame de Clèves' extreme sadness—try as she did to hide it. Perhaps glances and kind words would not have increased Monsieur de Nemours' love as much as did this austere conduct.

One evening when Monsieur and Madame de Clèves were at the Queen's reception, some one said there was a rumour that the King would nominate an additional nobleman of the Court to accompany Madame to Spain. Monsieur de Clèves was watching his wife when it was stated that the person chosen would perhaps be the Chevalier de Guise or Marshal de Saint-André. He noticed that she showed no agitation at either name, nor at the proposal that they would make the journey with her. That led him to believe that neither of these two was the person whose presence she feared ; and, wishing to justify his suspicions, he went into the Queen's room, where the King was. After staying there some time, he returned to his wife, and whispered to her that he had just heard that it was Monsieur de Nemours who would go with them to Spain.

The mention of Monsieur de Nemours and the thought of being exposed to seeing him in the presence of her husband every day during a long journey gave rise to such emotion

THIRD PART

in Madame de Clèves that she could not hide it. So, wishing to attribute it to other reasons, she replied : “ The choice of the Duke is very unfortunate for you : he will share all the honours, and it seems to me that you ought to try to have some one else chosen.”

“ It is not pride, Madame ”, replied Monsieur de Clèves, “ that makes you apprehend that Monsieur de Nemours will accompany me. You are grieved for a different reason, and your grief informs me of something that I should have learnt from another woman by the joy she would have felt. But have no fear. What I have just told you is not true, and I invented it to be sure of something that I had already only too strongly suspected.” With these words he went away, not wishing to increase by his presence the extreme embarrassment in which he saw his wife.

At that moment Monsieur de Nemours came in, and at once noticed Madame de Clèves’ condition. He went up to her and said in a low voice that his respect for her forbade him to ask what caused her to be more pensive than usual. His voice brought her to herself again ; and, looking at him without having heard what he had just said to her, full of her own thoughts and of the fear that her husband might see him with her, she exclaimed : “ In Heaven’s name, leave me alone ! ”

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

“ Alas, Madame ”, he replied, “ I leave you too much alone ! Of what can you complain ? I do not dare speak to you ; I do not dare even look at you ; I do not come near you without trembling. How have I brought upon myself what you have just said, and why do you infer that I have something to do with the trouble in which I find you ? ”

Madame de Clèves deeply regretted that she had given Monsieur de Nemours an opportunity to express himself more clearly than he had ever done before. She left him without answering, and went home in greater agitation than she had ever before been. Her husband at once noticed the increase in her embarrassment : he saw that she feared he would talk to her of what had happened. He followed her into a small room to which she had retired.

“ Do not avoid me, Madame ”, said he ; “ I shall say nothing that will hurt you. I beg your pardon for surprising you as I did a short time ago ; I am sufficiently punished for it by what I learned, Monsieur de Nemours being, of all men, the one I most feared. I see the danger you are in : restrain yourself for your own sake and, if it be possible, for my sake too. I do not ask it as a husband, but as a man whose only happiness is in you, and who has for you a love stronger and more tender than the love your heart prefers.”

Monsieur de Clèves was deeply moved as he

THIRD PART

uttered the last words, and he finished with difficulty. His wife was touched to the heart ; and, bursting into tears, she embraced him with a tenderness and emotion that reduced him to a state little better than hers. They remained for some time in silence, and separated without having the strength to speak to each other.

The preparations for Madame's wedding were completed. The Duke of Alva arrived to marry her. He was received with all the display and ceremony that could be produced for such an occasion. The King sent to meet him the Prince of Condé, the Cardinals de Lorraine and de Guise, the Dukes of Lorraine, Ferrara, Aumale, Bouillon, Guise, and Nemours. They had many gentlemen-in-waiting and a great number of pages wearing their liveries. The King himself received the Duke of Alva at the outer door of the Louvre, with the two hundred gentlemen-in-waiting and the Connétable at their head. When the Duke came up to the King, he tried to embrace his knees, but the King prevented him, and had him walk by his side to the apartments of the Queen and of Madame, to whom the Duke of Alva brought a magnificent present from his master. He then called on Madame Marguerite, the King's sister, to convey to her the compliments of the Duke of Savoy and to assure her that he would arrive in a few days.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

There were great receptions at the Louvre to show the Duke of Alva and the Prince of Orange, who had accompanied him, the beauties of the Court.

Madame de Clèves did not dare absent herself, however much she desired to do so, for fear of offending her husband, who absolutely insisted upon her going. What urged her still more to go was the absence of Monsieur de Nemours. He had gone to meet the Duke of Savoy, and, after the arrival of this prince, he was obliged to be almost always in attendance to help in everything that concerned his wedding ceremony. Hence Madame de Clèves did not meet the Duke of Nemours as often as usual, and she was, to some extent, at peace.

The Vidame de Chartres had not forgotten the conversation he had had with Monsieur de Nemours. The impression had persisted in his mind that the adventure the Duke had related was his own, and he watched him so closely that perhaps he would have found out the truth, had not the arrival of the Duke of Alva and of the Duke of Savoy created a change and a bustle at Court that prevented his seeing that which might have enlightened him. The wish to enlighten himself, or rather the natural tendency one has to tell all one knows to the woman one loves, made him repeat to Madame de Martigues the extraordinary action of this woman who had confessed to her husband her

THIRD PART

love for another. He assured Madame de Martigues that Monsieur de Nemours was the person who had inspired this violent passion, and he begged her to help him watch the Duke. Madame de Martigues was very glad to learn what the Vidame had told her, and the curiosity she had always noticed in the Dauphiness for all that concerned Monsieur de Nemours increased still further her desire to get to the bottom of this affair.

A few days before the one set for the wedding ceremony, the Dauphiness gave a supper for her father-in-law, the King, and the Duchess of Valentinois. Madame de Clèves, who was delayed in dressing, left for the Louvre later than usual. On the way there she met a gentleman who was coming from the Dauphiness to fetch her. As she entered the room, the Dauphiness called to her from the bed, on which she was reclining, that she had been waiting for her with the utmost impatience.

“I fancy, Madame”, replied Madame de Clèves, “that I need not thank you for your impatience, as it was doubtless caused by something other than the desire to see me.”

“That is so”, replied the Dauphiness; “and yet you ought to be obliged to me, for I want to tell you a story which I am sure you will be very glad to hear.”

Madame de Clèves knelt down by the bed,

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

and, fortunately for her, she was not facing the light.

“ You know ”, said the Dauphiness, “ how we wanted to find out what caused the change we saw in the Duke of Nemours. I think I know, and it is something that will surprise you. He is madly in love with one of the most beautiful women at Court—and she loves him.”

These words, which Madame de Clèves could not apply to herself, since she did not think anyone knew she loved the Duke, hurt her in a way that can well be imagined.

“ I see nothing in that ”, she replied, “ that should surprise anyone, considering his age and comeliness.”

“ Nor is that what I expected would surprise you ”, continued the Dauphiness. “ It is the news that this woman who loves Monsieur de Nemours has never shown him any sign of it, and that she was so afraid of not being always mistress of her love that she has confessed it to her husband, so that he will take her away from Court. And it is Monsieur de Nemours himself who has disclosed what I have just told you.”

If Madame de Clèves had been hurt at the outset at the thought that she had no part in this love-affair, the Dauphiness’ concluding words filled her with despair, by convincing her that she was only too deeply concerned in

THIRD PART

it. She could not reply, and remained with her head leaning on the bed, while the Dauphiness went on talking, so taken up with what she was saying that she did not notice this agitation.

When Madame de Clèves had recovered a little, she said : “ This does not seem to me a very probable story, Madame, and I should like to know who told it to you.”

“ It was Madame de Martigues ”, replied the Dauphiness, “ and she had it from the Vidame de Chartres. You know the Vidame is in love with her ; he confided it to her as a secret, and he had it from the Duke of Nemours himself. It is true that the Duke of Nemours did not tell him the lady’s name, and did not even admit that he was the person she loved ; but the Vidame de Chartres has no doubt on that point.”

As the Dauphiness finished speaking, some one approached the bed. Madame de Clèves’ position was such that she could not see who it was, but soon learned when the Dauphiness exclaimed gaily in surprise : “ Here he is in person, and I want to ask him whether it is so.”

Madame de Clèves concluded that it was the Duke of Nemours—and it was indeed he. Without turning towards him, she bent quickly towards the Dauphiness and whispered to her to be careful not to speak to him about this affair, that he had confided in the Vidame de

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Chartres, and that to tell might cause a quarrel between them. The Dauphiness laughingly accused her of being too prudent, and turned towards Monsieur de Nemours. He was dressed for the evening assembly, and opened the conversation with his characteristic grace.

“I believe, Madame”, he said, “that I may think, without temerity, that you were talking of me when I came in, that you intended to ask me something and that Madame de Clèves objects.”

“That is so”, replied the Dauphiness; “but I shall not be so obliging to her as I usually am. I want to know from you whether a story I have heard is true, and whether you are not the person in love with and loved by a lady at Court who carefully hides her love from you, and who has confessed it to her husband.”

Madame de Clèves’ agitation and confusion cannot be conceived; and, if death had come to relieve her from her position, she would have welcomed it. But Monsieur de Nemours was, if possible, still more embarrassed. What had been said by the Dauphiness, who, he had reason to believe, was interested in him, in the presence of the Princess of Clèves, who was the person at Court in whom she had most confidence and who had also most in her, gave rise in his mind to such a medley of strange thoughts that he could not control his ex-

THIRD PART

pression. The embarrassment in which his fault had placed Madame de Clèves, and the thought of the good reason he gave her to detest him, caused him such a shock that he was unable to reply.

The Dauphiness, seeing how abashed he was, said to Madame de Clèves : “ Look at him, look at him, and judge whether he is not concerned in this affair ! ”

Meanwhile, Monsieur de Nemours, recovering from the first shock and seeing the importance of extricating himself from such a dangerous situation, suddenly regained control of his wits and of his features.

“ I admit, Madame ”, said he, “ that no one could be more surprised and grieved than I am at the Vidame de Chartres’ betrayal of my trust in disclosing a love-affair of a friend of mine that I had confided to him. I might easily avenge myself ”, he went on, smiling with an air of assurance that almost dispelled the Dauphiness’ recent suspicions ; “ he has confided to me matters that are of no little importance. But I do not know, Madame, why you do me the honour of giving me a share in this affair. The Vidame cannot say it concerns me, since I told him the contrary. The qualification—a man in love—may be justified, but as for that of a man who is loved, I do not believe, Madame, that you can attribute it to me.”

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

The Duke was very glad to say something to the Dauphiness that referred to his former attitude towards her, so as to divert her mind from the thoughts she might have had. She, on her side, rather thought she caught his meaning, but, without replying to this, she continued to tease him about his embarrassment.

“ I was embarrassed, Madame ”, he replied, “ on behalf of my friend, and because of the reproaches he might justly make to me for having repeated something that is dearer to him than life. Yet his confidence was only partial, and he did not name the person he loved : all I know is that he is the man in all the world who is most in love and most to be pitied.”

“ Do you think he is so much to be pitied ”, asked the Dauphiness, “ since he is loved ? ”

“ Do you believe he is loved, Madame ”, he answered, “ and that a person really in love would confess it to her husband ? This person doubtless does not know what love is, and she has a faint feeling of gratitude towards him for his devotion to her. My friend cannot delude himself by any hope ; but, unhappy as he is, he considers himself happy in having at least given rise to the fear of loving him, and he would not change his condition for that of the most fortunate lover in the world.”

“ Your friend’s passion is easily satisfied ”, said the Dauphiness, “ and I am beginning to

THIRD PART

believe that you are not talking about yourself. I am almost of the opinion of Madame de Clèves, who maintains that the affair cannot have happened."

"I do not think, indeed, that it can", said Madame de Clèves, who had not yet spoken ; "and, even if it were possible, how could it be known ? It is not likely that a woman capable of such an extraordinary action would be weak enough to tell of it. Nor is it likely that her husband would tell of it either, or he would be a husband very unworthy of his wife's action."

Monsieur de Nemours, who saw that Madame de Clèves suspected her husband, was very glad to confirm the thought ; he knew him to be the most redoubtable rival he had to overcome. "Jealousy", he replied, "and the desire to know more, perhaps, than was told him, can make a husband commit many indiscretions."

Madame de Clèves' strength and courage could stand no more, and, being unable to carry on the conversation, she was about to say she felt faint, when, fortunately for her, the Duchess of Valentinois entered and told the Dauphiness that the King was coming. The Princess withdrew to her room to dress. Monsieur de Nemours approached Madame de Clèves as she was about to follow her, and said : "I would give my life, Madame, for a moment's speech with you ; but, of all the important

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

things I have to say to you, nothing appears to me of greater consequence than to beg you to believe that, if I have said something that the Dauphiness might apply to herself, I did this for reasons that in no way concern her."

Madame de Clèves gave no sign of having heard him : she went away without looking at him, and joined the suite of the King, who had just come in. As there was a crowd of people, she caught her foot in her dress and stumbled. She seized this excuse to leave a place in which she had not the strength to stay, and, pretending she could not stand, she went home.

Monsieur de Clèves came to the Louvre, and was surprised not to find his wife there. He was told of the accident that had happened to her. He returned home at once to see how she was : he found her in bed, and learned that her injury was slight. When he had been with her for some time, he noticed that she was extremely sad, so much so as to excite his surprise : "What is the matter, Madame ?" said he. "It seems to me that you are suffering from something other than what you complained about."

"I have the deepest grief I could ever have ", she replied. "What use have you made of the extraordinary, or rather the mad confession I made you ? Did I not deserve secrecy ?

THIRD PART

And, even if I did not deserve it, did not your own interests require it? Were you obliged, in your curiosity to know a name that I ought not to tell you, to confide in some one in an attempt to find it out? Nothing but this desire could have made you guilty of such a cruel indiscretion. The consequences are as serious as can be; the affair is known, and it has been related to me without the teller knowing that I was principally concerned."

"What are you saying, Madame?" he exclaimed. "You accuse me of having told what passed between you and me, and you inform me that the thing is known. I do not justify my action of repeating it; you cannot believe such a thing possible; and you must undoubtedly have applied to yourself something told you about another woman."

"Oh, sir", she replied, "there is not in all the world another experience like mine; there is not another woman capable of such a thing. It cannot have been invented by chance—no one ever imagined such a thing, and the thought never entered any mind except mine. The Dauphiness has just told me the whole story; she had it from the Vidame de Chartres, who had it from Monsieur de Nemours."

"Monsieur de Nemours!" cried Monsieur de Clèves, with a gesture of anger and despair. "What! the Duke of Nemours knows that you love him and that I know it!"

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

“ You persist in choosing Monsieur de Nemours rather than some one else ”, she replied. “ I told you that I should never reply in answer to your suspicions. I am unaware whether Monsieur de Nemours knows the part I played in this affair, and the part you attribute to him, but he has described it to the Vidame de Chartres, and told him that he had it from a friend of his, who did not mention the lady’s name. This friend of Monsieur de Nemours must be a friend of yours, and you must have trusted him to try and get information for you.”

“ Is there a friend in the world to whom one would entrust such a secret ? ” asked Monsieur de Clèves ; “ and would anyone wish to confirm suspicions at the price of telling another what one would wish to hide from oneself ? Think rather, Madame, of the persons to whom *you* have spoken. It is more probable that you, rather than I, have let the secret out. You were unable to bear alone the difficulties in which you found yourself, and you sought the solace of unburdening yourself to some friend, who has betrayed you.”

“ Do not overwhelm me completely ”, she cried ; “ and do not be cruel enough to accuse me of a wrong which *you* have done. Can you suspect me of this ? and, because I was capable of confiding in you, am I capable of confiding in anyone else ? ”

THIRD PART

The confession Madame de Clèves had made to her husband was such striking evidence of her sincerity, and she so strenuously denied having confided in anyone, that Monsieur de Clèves did not know what to think. On the other hand, he was sure he had repeated nothing ; it was a matter that no one could have guessed ; it was known—so it must have come from one of them. But what caused him the keenest grief was the knowledge that this secret was in somebody else's keeping, and that apparently it would soon be divulged.

Madame de Clèves' thoughts were almost the same : she considered it equally impossible that her husband had spoken or had not spoken. What Monsieur de Nemours had said—that curiosity could give rise to indiscretions on a husband's part—seemed to fit so exactly Monsieur de Clèves' case that she could not believe it had been said by mere chance ; and this probability led her to believe that Monsieur de Clèves had betrayed the confidence she had placed in him. They were both so absorbed in their thoughts that they remained silent for some time, and they broke this silence only to repeat what they had already said several times, and remained with hearts and minds more estranged and more changed than they had ever before been.

It is easy to imagine the way they passed the night. Monsieur de Clèves had completely

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

worn out his constancy in the torture of seeing a woman he adored touched with love for another man. His courage was exhausted ; he even felt that he ought not to take heart concerning a matter in which his pride and honour were so sorely wounded. He no longer knew what to think of his wife ; he no longer saw what course he ought to have her follow, or how he should himself behave ; on all sides he saw only the abyss and the void. Finally, after much agitation and incertitude, seeing that he must soon leave for Spain, he decided to do nothing that might increase the suspicion and the knowledge of his unhappy state. He went to Madame de Clèves and said that there was no question of finding out which of the two had betrayed the secret, but that they must show that the story that had been told was an invention that did not in any way concern her. It rested with her to persuade Monsieur de Nemours and the others of this, and she had only to treat him with the severity and coldness that she ought to have for a man who showed that he loved her. By this means she would easily dispel the notion that she was not indifferent to him ; hence she need not distress herself about all that he might have thought, for if in future she showed no weakness, all his thoughts would come to nothing. Above all, she must go as usual to the Louvre and to the assemblies.

THIRD PART

When he had said this, Monsieur de Clèves left his wife without waiting for her answer. She thought what he had said very reasonable, and the anger she felt against Monsieur de Nemours led her to believe that she would find it very easy to carry out ; but it seemed to her difficult to be present at all the wedding-ceremonies, and to appear there with a calm face and a quiet mind. Nevertheless, as she was to be the Dauphiness' train-bearer, and had been preferred to several other princesses for this, there was no way of avoiding it without much ado and without reasons being sought for her withdrawal. She made up her mind, therefore, to school herself ; but she took the rest of the day to prepare herself for this, and to give way to all the feelings that troubled her. She shut herself up in her room. Of all her trials, the one that came to her mind with the greatest violence was to have reason to complain of Monsieur de Nemours, and to find no means of justifying him. She could not doubt his having told of the affair to the Vidame de Chartres ; he had admitted this, and she could not doubt either, from the way he spoke, that he knew she was concerned in it. How could such great imprudence be excused, and what had become of the Duke's extreme discretion, which had so appealed to her ?

“ He was discreet ”, she said to herself,

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

“ as long as he thought he was unsuccessful ; but the thought of success, uncertain as it was, put an end to his discretion. He could not think himself loved without wanting it to be known. He has said all he could say. I have not admitted it is he whom I love ; he has suspected it and has shown his suspicions. If he had had confirmation ; he would have acted in the same way concerning it. I was wrong in believing there was a man capable of hiding what pleases his vanity. Yet it is for this man, whom I thought so different from the rest, that I find myself in the same plight as other women whom I am so far from resembling. I have lost the love and respect of a husband who ought to be my joy ; I shall soon be considered by everybody as a person madly and deeply in love. The man whom I love is no longer ignorant of the fact, and it was to avoid these misfortunes that I risked my happiness and even my life.”

These sad reflections were followed by a flood of tears ; but, however crushing the burden of her suffering, she was quite conscious that she would have had the strength to bear it if she had been satisfied with Monsieur de Nemours.

His state of mind was no better. His imprudence in speaking to the Vidame de Chartres, and the cruel consequences of this imprudence, caused him acute suffering. He

THIRD PART

could not recall, without being overwhelmed by embarrassment, the agitation and pain in which he had seen Madame de Clèves. He was inconsolable for having said to her things about this affair which, although courteous in themselves, seemed to him now coarse and rude, since they had disclosed to Madame de Clèves his knowledge that she was the lady who was deeply in love, and that she was in love with him. What he might have wished most was a conversation with her ; but he considered he ought to fear this more than desire it.

“ What could I say to her ? ” he cried. “ Should I show her again what I have made only too clear to her ? Shall I show her I know she loves me—I, who have never dared tell her I love her ? Shall I begin to talk openly to her of my love, so as to appear a man emboldened by hope ? Can I even think of going near her, and should I dare cause her the embarrassment of seeing me ? How could I justify myself ? I have no excuse, I am unworthy to be regarded by Madame de Clèves, nor do I hope that she will ever look at me. I have given her, by my fault, better means of protecting herself against me than all those she was seeking, and that she would, perhaps, have sought in vain. I am losing, by my imprudence, the pride and happiness of being loved by the most lovable and most estimable person in the world ; but, if I had lost this

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

happiness without her suffering by it and without my causing her cruel pain, it would be a consolation to me ; and I feel more keenly at this moment the harm I have done her than the harm I have done myself in her eyes."

Monsieur de Nemours grieved for a long time, and the same thoughts kept passing through his mind. The desire to speak to Madame de Clèves returned continually. He considered the means of doing so ; thought of writing to her ; but finally decided that, after the wrong he had done and in view of her disposition, his best course was to show her deep respect by his remorse and silence—to let her see, even, that he did not dare appear in her presence, and to wait for what time, chance, and the feeling she had for him might do in his favour. He also decided not to reproach the Vidame de Chartres for his lack of discretion, for fear of strengthening his suspicions.

Madame's betrothal, which took place on the morrow, and the wedding, which took place on the following day, so occupied the Court that Madame de Clèves and Monsieur de Nemours easily hid from the public their sadness and their agitation. The Dauphiness made to Madame de Clèves only a passing reference to the conversation they had had with Monsieur de Nemours, and Monsieur

THIRD PART

de Clèves was so scrupulously careful not to say anything more to his wife about all that had happened that she was not as embarrassed as she imagined she would be.

The betrothal took place at the Louvre, and, after the banquet and the ball, all the Royal household slept at the Bishop's palace, as was the custom. Next morning the Duke of Alva, who usually dressed very simply, put on a costume of cloth-of-gold interwoven with flame-colour, yellow, and black, and all covered with precious stones ; on his head he wore an arched crown. The Prince of Orange, arrayed in equal splendour, with his liveried servants, and all the Spaniards, followed by theirs, came to fetch the Duke of Alva from Villeroy House, where he was staying ; and all started, four abreast, for the Bishop's palace. As soon as he arrived, they set out in due order for the church ; the King accompanied Madame, who also wore an arched crown, and whose train was borne by Mesdemoiselles de Montpensier and de Longueville ; the Queen followed next, but without a crown ; after her came the Dauphiness, Madame the King's sister, Madame de Lorraine, and the Queen of Navarre, their trains being borne by Princesses. The Queens and the Princesses had all their maids-of-honour magnificently attired in the same colours as they themselves wore, so that by the colour of their dresses it could

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

easily be seen to whom the maids-of-honour belonged. They mounted the platform set up in the church, and the wedding took place. Then they returned to dinner at the Bishop's palace, and at about five o'clock they left for the Law Courts, where the banquet was to be held, to which the judges of the higher courts and the city officials were invited. The King, the Queens, the Princes, and the Princesses dined at the marble table in the great hall of the Law Courts, the Duke of Alva sitting next to the new Queen of Spain. Down the steps from the marble table, and on the King's right, was a table for the ambassadors, the archbishops, and the knights of the Order, and on the other side a table for the Judges. The Duke of Guise, wearing a robe of brushed cloth-of-gold, served as the King's chief steward, the Prince of Condé as chief of the King's buttery, the Duke of Nemours as cup-bearer. When the tables had been removed, the ball began ; it was interrupted by ballets, and extraordinary scenic effects ; then it went on again, and at length, after midnight, the King and all the Court went back to the Louvre.

Sad as Madame de Clèves was, yet in the eyes of every one, and especially in those of the Duke of Nemours, she appeared incomparably beautiful. He did not dare speak to her, although the confusion at the ceremony gave

THIRD PART

him many opportunities ; but he appeared so dejected in her presence, and showed such respectful fear of approaching her, that she no longer deemed him so blameworthy, although he had said to her nothing to justify himself. On the following days his behaviour was the same, and it again had the same effect on Madame de Clèves' heart.

At last the day of the tournament came. The Queens betook themselves to the platforms in the galleries that had been prepared for them. The four champions appeared at the end of the lists, with a great following of horses and retainers in livery—forming the most magnificent spectacle ever seen in France.

The King had no colours except black and white, which he always wore for Madame de Valentinois, who was a widow. The Duke of Ferrara and all his suite wore red and yellow. Monsieur de Guise appeared with incarnadine and white ; it was not known, at first, why he wore these colours, but it was recalled that they were those of a beautiful girl whom he had loved before her marriage and whom he still adored, though he no longer dared let her see it. Monsieur de Nemours wore yellow and black, for which the reason was sought in vain. Madame de Clèves had no difficulty in guessing : she remembered having said in his hearing that she liked yellow and regretted she was a blonde, because she

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

could never wear that colour. The Duke thought he could appear with this colour without indiscretion, since, as Madame de Clèves did not wear it, no one could suspect it was hers.

No one had ever shown as much skill as the four champions displayed. Although the King was the best horseman in his realm, it was difficult to award the palm. Monsieur de Nemours displayed a grace in all he did that might have inclined in his favour ladies less biased than Madame de Clèves. As soon as she saw him appear at the end of the lists, she felt extremely anxious, and every time he tilted she found it hard to hide her joy when he had successfully run his course.

Towards evening, when all was nearly over and people were on the point of leaving, the nation's evil fate made the King want to break just one more lance. He invited Count de Montgomery, who was very skilful, to enter the lists. The Count begged the King to excuse him, and put forward all the reasons he could think of; but the King, almost in a temper, sent him word that he absolutely insisted on it. The Queen sent a message to the King begging him not to tilt again, saying that he had done so well he ought to be satisfied, and that she entreated him to return to her. He replied that it was for love of her he was going to tilt again, and he took the field. She

THIRD PART

sent the Duke of Savoy to him to beg him again, but all in vain. He rode, the lances broke, and a piece of Count de Montgomery's struck the King's eye and stayed there. He instantly fell ; his equerries and Monsieur de Montmorency, who was one of the Marshals, ran to him. They were astounded to find him so seriously wounded, but the King was not alarmed ; he said it was a mere nothing, and that he forgave Count de Montgomery. It can be imagined what excitement and distress was caused by such a sad accident on a day intended for merry-making. As soon as the King had been carried to his bed, the surgeons examined the wound, and they found it very serious. The Connétable recalled the prediction made to the King that he would be killed in single combat, and had no doubt that the prophecy would come true.

The King of Spain, who was then at Brussels, hearing of the accident, sent his physician, a man of great reputation ; but he pronounced the case to be hopeless.

A Court so divided, and so full of conflicting interests as this, was in no small turmoil on the eve of such a great event. Yet all activities were hidden, and people appeared to be absorbed by only one anxiety—that concerning the King's health. The Queens, the Princes, and the Princesses scarcely left his antechamber.

Madame de Clèves, knowing it was her duty

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

to be there, that she would there see Monsieur de Nemours, that she could not hide from her husband the embarrassment this caused her, knowing also that the mere presence of the Duke would excuse him in her eyes and nullify all her resolutions, took the course of pretending to be ill. The Court was too engrossed to pay attention to her doings and find out whether her illness was real or feigned. Her husband alone could discover the truth, but she was not sorry he should know it ; so she stayed at home, little concerned by the great change that was coming about ; filled with her own thoughts, she had full liberty to indulge in them. Every one was in attendance on the King. Monsieur de Clèves came at certain times to give her news of him. He treated her as he had always done, except that, when they were alone, there was a slightly greater coldness and stiffness. He had not spoken to her again about all that had happened, and she had not the strength, nor had she considered it wise, to re-open the subject.

Monsieur de Nemours, who had expected to find a few moments to speak to Madame de Clèves, was quite surprised and much grieved not even to have the pleasure of seeing her. The King's injury was so great that, on the seventh day, the doctors gave him up. He received the news of his impending death with wonderful fortitude, the more admirable

THIRD PART

because he was losing his life as a result of such a sorry accident, and because he was dying in his prime, happy, adored by his subjects, and beloved by a Mistress whom he fondly loved. On the eve of his death, he had Madame, his sister, and the Duke of Savoy quietly married.

The state of Madame de Valentinois can well be imagined. The Queen did not allow her to see the King, and sent to her to ask for his seals and the crown jewels, which were in her keeping. The Duchess asked if the King were dead, and upon receiving the reply : "No", retorted : "I have then no master yet, and no one can force me to give up what he entrusted to me."

As soon as he expired, at Tournelles Palace, the Duke of Ferrara, the Duke of Guise, and the Duke of Nemours escorted to the Louvre the Queen-Dowager, the King and his wife, the Queen. Monsieur de Nemours escorted the Queen-Dowager. As they were setting out, she drew back a few paces and said to her daughter-in-law, the Queen, that it was the latter who took precedence, but it was easy to see that there was more bitterness than courtesy in the compliment.

FOURTH PART

CARDINAL DE LORRAINE had gained complete ascendancy over the mind of the Queen-Dowager ; the Vidame de Chartres had no longer any share in her good graces, and his love for Madame de Martigues, and the joy of being free, had even prevented his feeling the loss as it deserved to be felt. The Cardinal, during the ten days of the King's illness, had had time to make his plans and to lead the Queen to decisions in conformity with his projects ; hence, as soon as the King was dead, the Queen commanded the Connétable to stay at Tournelles with the body and perform the usual ceremonies. This duty kept him at a distance and prevented all return on his part. He sent a messenger to the King of Navarre, to summon him in haste, so that they might unite in opposition to the great power that he saw would accrue to the Guises. The command of the army was given to the Duke of Guise, the control of finances to Cardinal de Lorraine ; the Duchess of Valentinois was driven from Court ; Cardinal de Tournon, avowed enemy of the Connétable, was recalled, as was

FOURTH PART

Chancellor Olivier, avowed enemy of the Duchess of Valentinois. In short, the complexion of the Court was completely changed. The Duke of Guise took the same rank as the princes, of the blood in bearing the King's mantle at the funeral ceremony ; he and his brothers were complete masters, not merely by virtue of the Cardinal's hold over the Queen's mind but because she thought she could dismiss them if they offended her, while she could not so treat the Connétable, who was supported by the princes of the blood.

When the mourning-ceremonies were over, the Connétable came to the Louvre and was very coldly received by the King. He wished to speak to him in private, but the King called in the Guises and said, in their presence, that he advised him to retire, that the control of the finances and the command of the army were disposed of, and that when he needed his counsels he would send for him. The Queen-Dowager received him more coldly than had the King, and she even reproached him with having said to the late King that His Majesty's children did not resemble him. The King of Navarre arrived and was no better received. The Prince of Condé, less patient than his brother, complained openly : his complaints were unavailing ; he was removed from Court on the pretext of a mission to Flanders to sign the ratification of the peace. The King of

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

Navarre was shown a forged letter from the King of Spain which accused him of making attempts against Spanish fortresses ; he was made to fear for his territorial possessions—in short, he was led to decide to return to Béarn. The Queen facilitated his departure by asking him to escort Madame Elizabeth, and even obliged him to set out in advance of her. Thus there remained at Court no one who could counterbalance the power of the Guises.

Although it was annoying for Monsieur de Clèves not to escort Madame Elizabeth, yet he could not complain in view of the exalted rank of the person who was preferred to him ; but he was sorry to be relieved of this duty less because of the honour it would have brought him than because it would have removed his wife from Court without its appearing that he was deliberately keeping her away.

Not long after the King's death, the Court had to go to Rheims for the Coronation. As soon as this journey was mentioned, Madame de Clèves, who was still at home feigning illness, begged her husband to permit her not to go to Court, but to leave for Coulommiers, in order to get into the open air and care for her health. He told her that he did not want to pry into the question of whether it was her health that obliged her not to go on this journey, but that he consented to her not going, but for God's sake to stop bobbing up

FOURTH PART

between Madame de La Fayette and me. He had no difficulty in consenting to something that he had already decided upon. However good an opinion he had of his wife's virtue, he saw, clearly that prudence required him not to expose her any longer to meeting a man she loved.

Monsieur de Nemours soon learned that Madame de Clèves was not to go with the Court; he could not bring himself to leave without seeing her, and on the eve of his departure he went to her home, as late as propriety permitted, so as to find her alone. Fortune favoured his scheme. As he entered the courtyard, he met Madame de Nevers and Madame de Martigues, who were coming away, and who told him she was alone when they left. He went up in a state of emotion and agitation that can be compared only with that of Madame de Clèves when she was told that Monsieur de Nemours had come to see her. Her fear lest he should speak to her of his love, her apprehension lest she should reply too favourably, the worry this visit might cause her husband, the torment of telling him about it or of hiding all such things from him, came in a moment to her mind, and caused such a turmoil that she decided to avoid the one thing in the world that she perhaps most desired. She sent one of her maids to Monsieur de Nemours, who was in the antechamber,

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

to tell him that she had just been taken ill, and that she was very sorry not to be able to accept the honour he wished to pay her. What a grievous blow for the Duke not to see Madame de Clèves, and not to see her because she did not wish him to do so ! He was leaving on the morrow—he could no longer hope for a chance meeting ; he had not spoken to her since the conversation at the Dauphiness', and he had reason to believe that his misdeed of telling the Vidame had destroyed all his hopes —in short, he was leaving with everything possible to increase his acute suffering

As soon as Madame de Clèves had recovered a little from the agitation caused by the thought of the Duke's visit, all the reasons that had led her to refuse were dispelled ; she even thought that she had done wrong, and if she dared, or if yet there had been time, she would have had him recalled.

Mesdames de Nevers and de Martigues, after leaving her house, went to the Dauphiness'. Monsieur de Clèves was there. The Princess asked them where they had been, and they told her they had just come from Monsieur de Clèves', where they had spent the afternoon with a number of people, and that they had left there only Monsieur de Nemours. These words, that they considered so unimportant, were not so for Monsieur de Clèves, although he must have been well aware that Monsieur

FOURTH PART

de Nemours could often find opportunities to speak to his wife. Nevertheless, the idea of his being at her home ; of his being alone there ; that he could speak to her of his love, struck him at this moment as a thing so novel and so unbearable that jealousy blazed up in his heart with greater violence than ever before. He could not stay at the Dauphiness' : he went home, not knowing even why he did so, or whether he meant to interrupt Monsieur de Nemours. As soon as he drew near home, he looked to see whether anything indicated that the Duke was still there : he felt relieved when he saw he was there no longer, and he found consolation in the thought that he could not have stayed long. He suggested to himself that perhaps it was not Monsieur de Nemours of whom he ought to be jealous, and, although he had no doubt of it, he tried to raise doubts ; but so many things had convinced him that he did not long remain in the uncertainty he desired.

He went at once to his wife's room, and, after chatting for some time about unimportant matters, he could not refrain from asking what she had been doing and whom she had seen. She gave an account of her afternoon. As he saw that she did not mention Monsieur de Nemours, he tremblingly asked her if those were all she had seen, so as to give her a chance to name the Duke, and not cause him pain by

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

deceiving him. As she had not seen the Duke, she did not mention him, and Monsieur de Clèves, replying in a tone that showed how hurt he was, said : “ And Monsieur de Nemours, did you not see him, or have you forgotten him ? ”

“ I did not see him, indeed ”, she replied. “ I was not well, and I sent one of my maids to express my regrets.”

“ You were unwell, then, for him alone ” queried Monsieur de Clèves, “ since you saw every one else ? Why these distinctions for Monsieur de Nemours ? Why is he not the same as anyone else to you ? Why need you fear to see him ? Why do you let him see you fear him ? Why do you show him that you take advantage of the influence his passion gives you over him ? Would you dare refuse to see him if you did not know full well that he distinguishes your severity from incivility ? But why need you be severe with him ? From a person such as you, Madame, everything is a favour—except indifference.”

“ I did not think ”, replied Madame de Clèves, “ whatever suspicions you have of Monsieur de Nemours, that you could reprove me for not having seen him.”

“ Yet I do reprove you for it, Madame ”, he replied, “ and with reason. Why not see him if he has said nothing to you ? But, Madame, he *has* spoken to you—if his silence

FOURTH PART

had been the sole evidence of his passion, it would not have made such an impression on you. You have not been able to tell me the whole truth. You have hidden the greater part of it from me. You regret even the little you did confess to me, and you had not strength to continue. I am more unhappy than I thought—I am the unhappiest of men. You are my wife, I love you like a mistress, and you love another. This other is the most attractive man at Court, and he sees you every day and knows that you love him. And I actually thought ", he cried, " that you would overcome the love you have for him ! I must have lost my senses to have thought that possible ! "

" I do not know ", replied Madame de Clèves sorrowfully, " whether you were wrong in judging favourably an action as extraordinary as mine ; I do not know whether I was not mistaken in believing that you would be just towards me."

" Do not doubt it, Madame ", replied Monsieur de Clèves. " You were mistaken ; you expected from me things as impossible as those I expected from you. How could you hope that I would remain normal ? You had forgotten, then, that I loved you to distraction, and that I was your husband ? One or the other can drive a man to extremities—how much more so the two together ! Ah ! how they are doing just that ! " he continued.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

“ I have none but violent and contradictory feelings that I cannot master—I feel no longer worthy of you—you seem to me no longer worthy of me ; I adore you, I hate you ; I offend you, I beg your pardon ; I admire you, I am ashamed of admiring you. In short, there is no longer calm or reason in me. I do not know how I have been able to live since you spoke to me at Coulommiers, and since the day when you heard from the Dauphiness that your affair was known. I cannot understand how it leaked out, nor what passed between Monsieur de Nemours and you on this subject. You will never explain it, and I do not ask you to explain ; I only ask you to remember you have made me the most unhappy man in the world.”

Monsieur de Clèves left his wife with these words, and went away next day without seeing her ; but he wrote her a letter full of sorrow, courtesy, and affection. She sent a reply so touching and so full of assurances concerning her past and future conduct, that, as they were based on fact and expressed her real feelings, this letter made an impression on Monsieur de Clèves and brought him some peace of mind. Moreover, since Monsieur de Nemours was on his way to join the King, as he was himself, he had the consolation of knowing that the Duke would not be in the same place as Madame de Clèves. Every time the

FOURTH PART

latter spoke to her husband, the love he showed, the courtesy of his conduct, the affection she had for him, and her obligations to him made impressions on her heart that weakened the idea of Monsieur de Nemours ; but that was only for a time, and the idea returned, more vivid and more insistent than before.

The first few days after the Duke's departure, she scarcely felt his absence ; then it seemed to her cruel ; since she had fallen in love with him, not a day had passed without her hoping or fearing to meet him, and she suffered at the thought that chance was powerless to bring about a meeting.

She went to Coulommiers, and, for her visit, she took care to have brought there some large pictures that she had had copied from originals ordered by Madame de Valentinois for the great house at Anet. All the noteworthy events of the King's reign were portrayed in these pictures. There was, among others, one of the siege of Metz, and all those who had distinguished themselves there appeared in life-like portraiture. Monsieur de Nemours was among these, and that was perhaps why Madame de Clèves wanted to have these pictures.

Madame de Martigues, who had been unable to leave with the Court, promised her to spend a few days at Coulommiers. The Queen's favour, which they shared, had caused no

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

jealousy or estrangement between them ; they were friends, without, however, confiding their intimate affairs to each other. Madame de Clèves knew that Madame de Martigues loved the Vidame ; but Madame de Martigues did not know that Madame de Clèves loved Monsieur de Nemours, or that he loved her. Being the Vidame's niece, Madame de Clèves was dearer to Madame de Martigues, and Madame de Clèves liked her, too, because Madame de Martigues was in love, as she herself was, and with her own lover's intimate friend.

Madame de Martigues came to Coulommiers as she had promised Madame de Clèves : she found her leading a lonely life. The Princess had tried to ensure complete solitude and to pass her evenings in the garden without being accompanied by her servants. She came to the summer-house where Monsieur de Nemours had overheard her confession ; she went into the small room that was open towards the garden. Her maids and her servants stayed in the other small room or in the summer-house, and did not come to her unless they were called. Madame de Martigues had never seen Coulommiers ; she was surprised at all the loveliness she found there, and especially at the charm of the summer-house, in which she and Madame de Clèves always spent the evening. The freedom of being alone, at night, in the most beautiful surroundings,

FOURTH PART

permitted never-ending conversations between two young women whose hearts hid ardent passions ; and, although they did not confide in each other, they found keen pleasure in talking together. Madame de Martigues would have grieved to leave Coulommiers had it not been to go where the Vidame was staying. She left for Chambord, where the Court was at that time.

The Coronation had been performed at Rheims by Cardinal de Lorraine, and the rest of the summer was to be passed at the Palace of Chambord, that had just been built. The Queen was very glad to see Madame de Martigues again ; and, after giving several indications of this, she asked her for news of Madame de Clèves and of what she was doing in the country. Monsieur de Nemours and Monsieur de Clèves were present at the Queen's. Madame de Martigues, who had found Coulommiers delightful, told of all its attractions, and she gave in great detail a description of the summer-house in the forest and of Madame de Clèves' pleasure in being alone there for part of the night. Monsieur de Nemours, who knew the place well enough to follow what Madame de Martigues said about it, thought it not impossible for him to see Madame de Clèves there without her seeing him. He put a few questions to Madame de Martigues to inform himself further ; and

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

Monsieur de Clèves, who had been watching him all the time Madame de Martigues was speaking, thought he saw, then, what was passing in his mind. The questions put by him confirmed this opinion, and he had no doubt the Duke intended to go to see his wife. Nor was he mistaken in his suspicions : this intention had so seized upon Monsieur de Nemours' mind that, after passing the night in thinking of a means of carrying it out, the very next morning he asked the King's permission to leave for Paris on a pretext he invented.

Monsieur de Clèves had no doubt as to the purpose of this journey ; but he decided to inform himself concerning his wife's conduct and not to remain in cruel uncertainty. He wanted to leave at the same time as Monsieur de Nemours, and to go himself secretly to find out what would be the result of this journey ; but, fearing that his departure might seem odd and that Monsieur de Nemours, hearing of it, might change his plans, he decided to entrust the matter to one of his gentlemen-in-waiting on whose trustworthiness and intelligence he could rely. He told him of the trouble he was in, of Madame de Clèves' virtue up to that time, and ordered him to dog Monsieur de Nemours' footsteps, to watch him closely, to see whether he did not go to Coulommiers and enter the garden by night.

FOURTH PART

The gentleman, who was well fitted for such a task, performed it with all conceivable exactness. He followed Monsieur de Nemours as far as a village half a league from Coulommiers, where the Duke stopped, and he easily guessed that this was to wait for nightfall. He did not think it advisable that he, too, should wait there. He skirted the village, and went into the forest to a place he thought Monsieur de Nemours would be likely to pass. He was not mistaken in his inference. As soon as night fell, he heard footsteps, and, although it was dark, he easily recognized Monsieur de Nemours. He saw him walk all round the outside of the garden, as though listening for sounds of people and selecting the place where he could most easily enter. The fence was very high, and there were palisades behind it to prevent anyone from entering ; so that it was not easy to force a way in—yet Monsieur de Nemours finally succeeded. As soon as he was in the garden, he had no difficulty in discovering where Madame de Clèves was : he saw many lights in the little room, all the windows were open, and, gliding along the palisade, he drew near with an agitation and emotion that can easily be imagined. He hid behind one of the glazed doors to see what Madame de Clèves was doing. He saw she was alone, and so beautiful that he could scarcely restrain his rapture at the sight. It

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

was warm, and she had nothing on her head and shoulders but her loosely bound hair. She was on a couch with a table before her, on which were several baskets of ribbons. She chose some, and Monsieur de Nemours noticed they were of the same colours as those he had worn at the tournament.

He saw that she was making them into bows for a most peculiar Malacca cane that he had carried for some time and then given to his sister, from whom Madame de Clèves had taken it without seeming to recognize it as having belonged to Monsieur de Nemours. When she had finished her work, with a grace and charm that reflected in her face the feelings that filled her heart, she took up a candlestick and went over to a large table opposite the picture of the siege of Metz in which was the portrait of Monsieur de Nemours: she sat down and gazed at the portrait with the rapt attention that love alone can cause.

It would be impossible to express what Monsieur de Nemours felt at this moment. To see, late at night, in the most beautiful place in the world, a person he adored, to see her without her knowing he was looking, and to find her completely absorbed "in things related to the love she had for him—that had never been enjoyed or imagined by any other lover.

The Duke was so entranced that he stood

FOURTH PART

motionless looking at Madame de Clèves, without considering that every moment was precious. When he had come to himself a little, he thought he ought to wait to speak to her until she went into the garden. He thought he could do it more safely because she would be further away from her maids ; but, seeing that she stayed in the room, he decided to go in there. When he tried to carry out this resolution, how great was his emotion ! How he feared to shock her ! How afraid he was of bringing a change to the face, now so gentle, and seeing it all harsh and angry !

He reflected that it was madness—not to have come and seen Madame de Clèves without being seen—but to think of showing himself : he realized all that he had not previously considered. His boldness seemed to him beyond all reason, to come and surprise in the middle of the night a person to whom he had never yet spoken of his love. He reflected that he had no reason to expect her to listen to him, and that she would rightly be angry at the danger of possible serious consequences to which he exposed her. His courage failed him, and he was several times on the point of deciding to go back without showing himself. Urged, however, by the desire to speak to her, reassured by the hopes inspired by all he had seen, he went forward a few steps, but in such a state of agitation that his sash caught in the

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

glazed door and made a noise. Madame de Clèves turned her head, and, either because her thoughts were occupied with the Duke or because he was in a position sufficiently lighted for her to make him out, she thought she recognized him, and, without hesitating or turning again in his direction, she went into the room where her maids were. She was so agitated on entering that, to hide it, she was forced to say she was ill. She did this, too, that all her servants might be kept busy and give Monsieur de Nemours time to withdraw. When she thought the matter over, she decided that she had been mistaken, and that she had seen Monsieur de Nemours was an illusion. She knew he was at Chambord ; she considered it highly improbable he would have undertaken such a risky enterprise. Several times she thought of going back to the little room and looking into the garden to see whether anyone was there. Perhaps she hoped as much as she feared to find there Monsieur de Nemours. But at length reason and prudence prevailed over all her other feelings, and she found it better to stay in doubt as she was than to run the risk of trying to find out. She was a long time in deciding to leave a place to which she thought the Duke so near, and it was nearly light when she returned to the house.

Monsieur de Nemours had stayed in the garden as long as he saw a light ; he had been

FOURTH PART

unable to give up hope of seeing Madame de Clèves, although he was sure she had recognized him and had retired solely to avoid him. But when he saw the doors were being closed, he came to the conclusion there was no more hope. He struck the path quite near the place where the gentleman of Monsieur de Clèves' suite was in waiting. The latter followed him as far as the village from which he had set out the night before. Monsieur de Nemours decided to pass the day there, so as to return at night to Coulommiers, to see whether Madame de Clèves would again be cruel enough to flee from him or not to let herself be seen at all. Although he was extremely glad to have found her so occupied with thoughts of him, he was yet very hurt to have seen such an instinctive movement on her part to flee from him.

Never had there been passion so tender and so ardent as was then in the bosom of the Duke of Nemours. He walked forth beneath the willows bordering a small stream that ran behind the house where he was hiding. He went as far away as possible in order that no one could see or hear him ; he gave way to the transports of his love ; and his heart was so full that he could not forbear shedding some tears, but they were not such as grief makes flow—they were tempered with joy and with the charm that love alone can bring.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

He began to recall all Madame de Clèves' conduct since he had fallen in love with her ; what modest and proper indifference she had always shown, although she loved him ! “ For, in short, she loves me ”, he said ; “ she loves me, I cannot doubt it ; the most solemn pledges and the greatest favours are not as sure indications as those I have had ; yet I am treated as severely as if I were hated. I hoped for the effect of time ; I must no longer count on that. I see her ever on her guard against me and against herself. If I were not loved, I would think of pleasing ; but, I do please, I am loved, and the love is hidden from me. What then can I hope for, and what change should I expect in my destiny ? What ! I am to be loved by the most lovable woman in the world and feel the excess of love that arises from the first conviction of being loved, only to suffer the more the pain of being rebuffed ! Let me see that you love me, fair princess ”, he cried ; “ let me see your feelings ; if only I can learn them from you once in my life, I consent to your practising forever the severity with which you overwhelm me. Look upon me at least with eyes like those I saw you turn last night upon my portrait. Did you really look on that with such kindness, and yet so cruelly flee from me ? What did you fear ? Why does my love so frighten you ? You love me ; you hide it from me in vain—you have

FOURTH PART

yourself given me evidence of it unawares. I know my good fortune—let me enjoy it, and cease making me unhappy. Is it possible", he continued, "that I am loved by Madame de Clèves and that I am unhappy? How beautiful she was last night! How did I resist the desire to throw myself at her feet? If I had done so, I should perhaps have prevented her from fleeing; my respect would have reassured her. But perhaps she did not recognize me; I grieve more than I should, and the sight of a man at such an unusual hour frightened her."

These thoughts haunted Monsieur de Nemours all day. He waited impatiently for the night, and, when it came, he again took the road to Coulommiers. The gentleman of Monsieur de Clèves' suite, who had disguised himself so as to be less noticed, followed him to the place to which he had gone the night before, and saw him go into the garden. The Duke soon found that Madame de Clèves had no wish to risk his trying again to see her: all the doors were closed. He walked about in every direction to find out whether there were any lights to be seen; but all in vain.

Madame de Clèves, suspecting that Monsieur de Nemours might return, had stayed in her room; she feared she would not always have strength to flee from him, and she did not wish to expose herself to a possible con-

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

versation with him in a way so little in accordance with her previous conduct.

Although Monsieur de Nemours had no hope of seeing her, he could not bring himself to leave at once a place she frequented. He spent the whole night in the garden, and found some consolation in seeing, at least, the same things that she looked upon every day.

The sun had risen before he thought of leaving, but at length the fear of being detected obliged him to go away.

It was impossible for him to leave the district without seeing Madame de Clèves, and he went to call on Madame de Mercœur, who was staying in the house near Coulommiers. She was extremely surprised at her brother's arrival. He invented a reason for the journey, probable enough to deceive her, and, in short, carried out his plan so cleverly that he obliged her to propose herself a visit to Madame de Clèves. The proposal was acted upon that very day, and Monsieur de Nemours told his sister he would part from her at Coulommiers, to return with all speed to the King. He planned the separation at Coulommiers with the intention of letting her leave first, and thought he had found an infallible means of saying what he had to say to Madame de Clèves.

When they arrived, she was walking in a broad path skirting the flower-garden. The sight of Monsieur de Nemours caused her no

FOURTH PART

little emotion, and left no doubt in her mind that it was he whom she had seen the previous night. This conviction made her somewhat angry, because she considered his action bold and imprudent. The Duke noticed in her expression a coldness that pained him. Conversation turned on unimportant matters, yet he was skilful enough to show so much wit, amiability, and admiration for Madame de Clèves that he dispelled, in spite of herself, a part of the coldness she had at first shown.

When he had recovered from his first fear, he expressed a great desire to see the summer-house in the forest : he spoke of it as the most beautiful place in the world, and gave such a detailed description of it that Madame de Mercœur told him he must have been there several times to know all its charms so well.

“ I do not think, however ”, replied Madame de Clèves, “ that Monsieur de Nemours has ever been inside it ; it has been finished but a very short time.”

“ Nor is it long since I was there ”, replied Monsieur de Nemours, fixing his eyes on her, “ and I ought, perhaps, to be very glad that you have forgotten you saw me there.”

Madame de Mercœur, who was attracted by the beauty of the garden, paid no attention to what her brother was saying. Madame de Clèves blushed and, casting down her eyes, said, without looking at Monsieur de Nemours :

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

“I do not remember seeing you there ; if you have been there, it was without my knowledge.”

“It is true, Madame”, replied Monsieur de Nemours, “that I was there without your permission, and I spent there the happiest and the most wretched moments of my life.”

Madame de Clèves understood only too well all the Duke was saying, but she did not reply ; she thought of preventing Madame de Mercœur from going into the little room, because Monsieur de Nemours’ portrait was there and she did not wish her to see it. She managed things so well that time passed quickly, and Madame de Mercœur spoke of returning ; but, when Madame de Clèves saw that Monsieur de Nemours and his sister were not leaving together, she easily guessed to what she was going to be exposed : she found herself in the same difficulty she had experienced in Paris, and she again took the same course. Fear lest this visit should confirm still further her husband’s suspicions contributed in no small degree to her decision, and, in order to prevent Monsieur de Nemours from remaining alone with her, she told Madame de Mercœur she would accompany her to the edge of the forest, and ordered her carriage to follow her. The Duke’s pain, when he saw once more this continued severity on the part of Madame de Clèves, was so acute that he immediately

FOURTH PART

turned pale. Madame de Mercœur asked him if he was ill ; but he looked at Madame de Clèves, without being seen, and his looks said plainly that his only suffering was despair. Yet he had to let them go without daring to follow them. After what he had said, he could not go back with his sister. So he returned to Paris, and left there the following day.

The gentleman of Monsieur de Clèves' suite had continued to watch him. He also returned to Paris, and, when he saw Monsieur de Nemours set out for Chambord, he took the post so as to get there before him and report on his journey. His master was awaiting his return, as the event that might decide the unhappiness of his whole life.

As soon as he saw him, he judged from his face and his silence that he had only bad news to tell him. He remained for some time overcome by anguish, with bowed head, unable to speak : at length he motioned to him to withdraw. " Go ! " said he, " I see what you have to tell me, but I have not strength to listen to it."

" I have nothing to report ", his gentleman replied, " on which a *definite* conclusion can be based. It is true that Monsieur de Nemours went into the garden near the forest two nights running, and that the following day he went to Coulommiers with Madame de Mercœur."

" 'Tis enough ", interrupted Monsieur de

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

Clèves ; “ ‘tis enough ”, and he again motioned to him to withdraw. “ I do not need any further enlightenment.”

The gentleman was forced to leave his master plunged in despair. There never was perhaps deeper despair, and few men of as great courage and with such a loving heart as Monsieur de Clèves have felt at one and the same time the pain caused by the infidelity of a Mistress, and the shame of being betrayed by a wife.

Monsieur de Clèves could not bear the burden thus imposed upon him. He was seized with a fever that very night, and grave complications at once showed that the illness was very serious. Madame de Clèves was informed, and she came with all speed. When she reached him, he was worse ; she found in his manner towards her something so cold, yea so icy that she was extremely surprised and distressed. It seemed to her that he even had difficulty in bearing the things she did for him, but she thought, after all, that this was perhaps a result of his illness. As soon as she arrived at Blois, where the Court was at that time, Monsieur de Nemours could not refrain from rejoicing at the knowledge that she was in the same place as himself. He tried to see her, and went every day to the house on the pretext of inquiring after Monsieur de Clèves, but it was in vain ; she did not leave her husband’s

FOURTH PART

room, and was much distressed by the condition in which she found him. Monsieur de Nemours was in despair because she was so grieved ; he readily understood how her trouble would reawaken the affection she had for Monsieur de Clèves, and to what extent this affection supplied a dangerous diversion from the love that was in her heart. This opinion caused him great mortification for some time ; but the seriousness of Monsieur de Clèves' illness created for him new expectations. He saw that Madame de Clèves would be free, perhaps, to follow the dictates of her heart, and that the future might hold for him a period of happiness and lasting pleasures. He could not bear this thought, for it stirred up in him so much emotion, so many transports, that he banished it from his mind, fearing lest he should find himself too wretched if his hopes happened to be shattered.

Meanwhile Monsieur de Clèves was almost given up by the doctors. On one of the last days of his illness, after he had passed a very bad night, he said toward morning that he wished to sleep. Madame de Clèves stayed alone in the room. It seemed to her that, instead of sleeping, he was very uneasy : she drew near and knelt down by his bed, her face covered with tears. Monsieur de Clèves had decided not to show the great grievance he had against her, but the devoted way she nursed

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

him and her distress, that sometimes seemed genuine and that sometimes he considered to be evidence of dissimulation and perfidy, gave rise to such painful and contradictory feelings that he could not keep them to himself.

“ You are shedding many tears, Madame ”, said he, “ for a death that you are causing and that cannot give rise to the sorrow you show. I am no longer in a state to reproach you ”, he continued, in a voice enfeebled by illness and grief, “ but I am dying of the cruel suffering you have caused me. Should an action as unusual as yours of speaking to me at Coulommiers have so little result ? Why reveal to me the love you had for Monsieur de Nemours if your virtue was not strong enough to resist it ? I loved you to the point of being glad to be in ignorance—I admit it to my shame. I have regretted the false security which you dispelled. Why did you not leave me in that peaceful blindness enjoyed by so many husbands ? I should perhaps have been unaware all my life that you loved Monsieur de Nemours. I am dying ”, he added, “ but know that you are making death welcome to me, and that, after being deprived of the esteem and tenderness I had for you, I should find life horrible. What could I do with life ? ” he continued ; “ pass it with a woman whom I have loved so well and by whom I have been so cruelly betrayed—or live apart from this same woman

FOURTH PART

and descend to a quarrel and violence so contrary to my disposition and to the love I had for you ? This has been greater than you know, Madame ; I have hidden the greater part of it from you for fear of being importunate or of losing a little of your esteem by conduct unsuited to a husband—in short, I deserved your love. I repeat, I am dying without regret, since I could not win it and can no longer desire it. Farewell, Madame ! You will some day miss the man who loved you with a true and lawful passion. You will know the troubles that sensitive people suffer in these entanglements, and you will know the difference between being loved as I love you and by people who, while professing love, seek only the glory of seducing you ; but my death will leave you free ”, he added, “ and you can make Monsieur de Nemours happy without committing a sin. But does it matter ”, he exclaimed, “ what happens when I am no more, and must I be weak enough to give a thought to it ? ”

Madame de Clèves was so far from imagining that her husband could suspect her that she listened to all he said without understanding and without any other thought than that he was reproaching her for her affection for Monsieur de Nemours. At length, suddenly enlightened, she cried : “ I, guilty—the very thought is unknown to me ! The most austere

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

virtue could inspire no other conduct than mine has been, and I have never done a thing that I should not have wished you to see."

"Would you have wished", replied Monsieur de Clèves, looking at her disdainfully, "to have had me present during the nights you passed with Monsieur de Nemours? Oh! Madame, am I speaking of you when I speak of a woman who has spent nights with a man?"

"No, sir", she answered, "no, you are not speaking of me. I have never passed either nights or moments with Monsieur de Nemours; he has never seen me in private; I have never tolerated or listened to him, and I would take my oath—"

"Say no more", interrupted Monsieur de Clèves; "false oaths or a confession would perhaps grieve me equally."

Madame de Clèves could not reply; her tears and her grief prevented her speaking; at last, making an effort, she said: "Look at me, at least; if my interest alone were at stake, I would put up with these reproaches, but your life is at stake. Listen to me for your own sake; it is impossible that, with truth on my side, I should not convince you of my innocence."

"Would to God you could convince me of it", he cried. "But what can you say? Did not Monsieur de Nemours go to Coulommiers with his sister, and had he not passed the

FOURTH PART

two preceding nights with you in the garden by the forest ? ”

“ If that is my sin ”, she replied, “ it is easy to exonerate myself. I do not ask you to believe me, but believe your servants, and find out whether I went into the garden by the forest the night before Monsieur de Nemours came to Coulommiers, and whether the night before that I did not leave it two hours sooner than usual.”

She then told him how she thought she saw some one in the garden : she admitted she had believed it to be Monsieur de Nemours. She spoke with such assurance, and truth convinces so easily, even when it is not probable, that Monsieur de Clèves was almost assured of her innocence.

“ I do not know whether I should allow myself to believe you ; I feel so near to death that I want to see nothing that might make me long for life. You have enlightened me too late, but it will always be a consolation to bear with me the thought that you are worthy of the esteem I have had for you. I beg you to let me have the further consolation of thinking that my memory will be dear to you, and that, if it had depended on you, you would have had for me the feelings you have for another.”

He would have continued, but a syncope prevented further speech. Madame de Clèves

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

sent for the doctors : they found him almost lifeless. Nevertheless, he lingered a few days longer, and died at last with admirable fortitude.

Madame de Clèves was left in such a violent state of affliction that she almost lost her reason. The Queen came to see her with solicitude, and took her to a convent without her realizing where she was going. Her sisters-in-law brought her back to Paris before she was yet in a state to be really conscious of her affliction. When she began to have strength to consider it, and saw what a husband she had lost, when she reflected that she was the cause of his death and through the love she had had for another man, the horror she felt for herself and for Monsieur de Nemours cannot be conceived.

The Duke did not dare, during these early days, to pay her any other attentions than those required by etiquette. He knew Madame de Clèves well enough to believe that anything more would be distasteful to her, but what he learned later showed him clearly that he must behave in this way for a long time.

One of his equerries informed him that the gentleman of Monsieur de Clèves' suite, who was his close friend, moved by the loss of his master, had told him that Monsieur de Nemours' journey to Coulommiers was the cause of his master's death. Monsieur de

FOURTH PART

Nemours was extremely surprised to hear this ; but, after thinking it over, he guessed part of the truth, and he readily understood what the feelings of Madame de Clèves would be at first, and what aversion she would have for him if she thought her husband's death had been caused by jealousy. He thought he would do well not to remind her of himself for some time, and he carried this out, difficult as it was.

He went to Paris, and could not refrain, nevertheless, from going to her door and asking how she was. He was informed that she received no one, and that she had even forbidden mention being made to her of those who called. Perhaps such orders had been given because of the Duke, and to avoid hearing his name mentioned. Monsieur de Nemours was too much in love to be able to live deprived so completely of the sight of Madame de Clèves. He decided to find a means, however difficult it might be, of changing a condition that appeared to him unbearable.

The Princess' grief was out of all reason. Her dying husband—dying because of her and with so much tenderness for her—was always in her mind ; she continually recalled all she owed to him, and she accused herself, as of a crime, of not having felt love for him, as if that were a thing within her power. Her sole consolation was the thought that she regretted

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

him as he deserved, and that for the rest of her life she would do nothing but what he would have been glad for her to do if he had lived.

She had often wondered how he knew that Monsieur de Nemours had come to Coulommiers ; she did not suspect the Duke of having talked about it, and it seemed to her even immaterial if he had done so, to such an extent did she believe herself to be cured of, and far removed from, the love she had had for him. She felt, however, acute distress at the thought that he had caused her husband's death, and she remembered with sorrow the fear Monsieur de Clèves had expressed to her, when dying, that she would marry the Duke ; but all these pains were overshadowed by that of losing her husband, and she was not conscious of any other.

After several months, she passed from this state of violent grief to one of sadness and languor. Madame de Martigues paid a visit to Paris and called on her assiduously during her stay there. She chatted about the Court and all that was going on, and, although Madame de Clèves seemed to take no interest, Madame de Martigues went on talking about these things to occupy her mind.

She gave her news of the Vidame, of Monsieur de Guise, and of all the others who were distinguished in looks or in deeds. "As for

FOURTH PART

Monsieur de Nemours", she said, "I do not know whether affairs have taken the place of gallantry in his mind, but he is much less cheerful than he used to be ; he seems to shun feminine society ; he comes up to Paris frequently, and I think he is here now."

Mention of Monsieur de Nemours surprised Madame de Clèves, and caused her to blush ; she changed the subject, and Madame de Martigues did not notice her confusion.

Next day, the Princess, who sought occupations in keeping with her condition, went to see a man near her home who worked in silk in a particular way, and went there with the intention of having similar work done for her. When she had been shown some, she saw the door of a room where she thought there was more, and asked to have it opened. The proprietor replied that he had not the key, and that it was occupied by a man who came sometimes during the day to draw the fine houses and gardens to be seen from the windows. "He is the most comely man in the world", he went on ; "he scarcely looks as though he were forced to earn a living. Every time he comes here, I see him always gazing at the houses and the gardens, but I never see him work."

Madame de Clèves listened to this with close attention ; what Madame de Martigues had said about Monsieur de Nemours' being

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

in Paris connected itself in her mind with this comely man who frequented a house near hers, and it brought up the picture of Monsieur de Nemours, and of Monsieur de Nemours trying to see her. This caused her a confused emotion of which she did not know the cause. She went towards the windows to see on what they looked ; she found herself looking over all her garden and the front of her apartment. When she was in her room, she easily distinguished the same window to which she had been told this man came. The thought that it was Monsieur de Nemours entirely changed the state of her mind : she was no longer in a certain sorrowful calm that she was beginning to appreciate ; she felt uneasy and agitated ; in short, she wanted to get away from herself ; and she left the house and went for air into a garden beyond the suburbs where she thought she would be alone. She thought when she arrived that this was the case ; she saw no sign of anyone, and walked there for some time.

After going through a grove, she noticed, at the end of a path in the most secluded part of the garden, a kind of shelter open on all sides, to which she directed her steps. When she was near it, she saw a man lying on one of the seats, apparently plunged in deep thought, and she recognized Monsieur de Nemours. At the sight of him, she stopped short ; but her servants, who were following her, made a

FOURTH PART

noise that aroused Monsieur de Nemours from his day-dreams. Without noticing who had caused the noise he had heard, he got up to avoid the people coming towards him, and turned down another path, after bowing so low that he could not even see whom he was saluting.

Had he known what he was avoiding, with what ardour would he have retraced his steps ! But he went on following the path, and Madame de Clèves saw him leave by a back gate, where his carriage was waiting for him. What an effect this fleeting glimpse had on Madame de Clèves' heart ! What latent love rekindled in her heart, and with what violence ! She sat down in the very place Monsieur de Nemours had just left ; and there she remained as if overwhelmed. The Duke came to her mind, lovable above all in the world, loving her with a passion full of respect and constancy, neglecting all for her, respecting even her grief, thinking of seeing her without thinking of being seen ; leaving the Court, where he charmed every one, in order to go and gaze upon the walls that sheltered her, to come and muse in places where he had no hope of meeting her ; in short, a man worthy of being loved for his faithfulness alone, to whom she was so violently attracted that she would have loved him even if he had not loved her ; but, in addition, a man of high rank and suited to

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

her own. Neither duty nor virtue stood any longer in the way of her feelings : all obstacles were removed, and there remained of their past condition only the love of Monsieur de Nemours for her and her love for him.

All these thoughts were new to the Princess. Her grief at Monsieur de Clèves' death had so occupied her that she had been prevented from realizing the situation. The presence of Monsieur de Nemours brought them crowding to her mind ; but when she had marshalled them all, and recalled also that the very man she considered might marry her was the one whom she had loved while her husband was alive and who was the cause of his death, and that even on his death-bed her husband had expressed the fear that she should marry him, her strict virtue was so shocked by the idea that she found it scarcely less a crime to marry Monsieur de Nemours than she had found it to love him during her husband's life-time. She gave herself up to reflections so opposed to her happiness ; she fortified them further with several reasons that had to do with her tranquillity and the troubles she foresaw if she married the Duke. At length, after two hours spent in that place, she returned home, convinced that she ought to avoid the sight of him as something completely opposed to her duty.

But this conviction, which was a product

FOURTH PART

of her reason and her virtue, did not carry with it her heart. That remained true to Monsieur de Nemours with an ardour that reduced her to a state worthy of compassion, and that left her no more peace. She passed one of the most cruel nights she had ever passed. Next morning her first impulse was to look whether there was anyone at the window that overlooked her house. She did so—and saw Monsieur de Nemours. The sight of him surprised her, and she withdrew so quickly that the Duke inferred he had been recognized. He had often wished to be so, since his love had led him to discover this way of seeing Madame de Clèves, and, when he could not hope for this pleasure, he would go and dream in the garden where she had found him.

Weary at last of a state so unhappy and so uncertain, he decided to find some way of learning his fate. “What am I waiting for?” he said. “I have known for some time that she loves me; she is free; she can no longer plead duty. Why restrict myself to seeing her without being seen, and without speaking to her? Is it possible that love has so completely deprived me of sense and boldness, and that it has made me so different from what I was in former affairs? I had to respect Madame de Clèves’ grief; but I am respecting it too long, and I am giving her time to stifle the love she has for me.”

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Thereupon he considered the means he must use to see her. He believed there was now nothing that obliged him to hide his love from the Vidame de Chartres : he decided to tell him about it and to speak to him of his intentions concerning his niece.

The Vidame was then in Paris ; everybody had come up to see about equipment and clothes for attendance on the King, who was to escort the Queen of Spain. Monsieur de Nemours went to see him, therefore, and confessed frankly all he had hidden from him until then—except the state of Madame de Clèves' feelings, which he did not wish to appear to know.

The Vidame was very glad to hear all he had to say, and assured him that, without knowing his feelings, he had often thought, since Madame de Clèves had become a widow, that she was the only person worthy of him. Monsieur de Nemours begged him to say by what means he could talk to her and find out her intentions.

The Vidame proposed to take him to call on her, but Monsieur de Nemours thought that would displease her, because she had not yet received visitors. They were of the opinion that the Vidame must ask her to come to his apartment, on some pretext, and that Monsieur de Nemours should come there by a secret staircase, so as not to be seen by anyone. This plan was carried out. Madame de Clèves

FOURTH PART

came, the Vidame went to meet her, and escorted her to a large room at the end of his apartment ; some time after, Monsieur de Nemours came in, as if by chance. Madame de Clèves was extremely surprised to see him : she blushed and tried to hide her blushes. At first the Vidame talked of unimportant matters, and then left the room, pretending he had some orders to give. He begged Madame de Clèves to do the honours of his home, and said that he would be back in a moment.

No one could express what Monsieur de Nemours and Madame de Clèves felt upon finding themselves alone and for the first time free to speak. They remained for some time without saying a word ; then, at last, Monsieur de Nemours broke the silence. “ Will you forgive Monsieur de Chartres, Madame ”, he asked, “ for having given me the opportunity of seeing you and talking to you which you have always so cruelly denied me ? ”

“ I ought not to pardon him ”, she replied, “ for having forgotten my condition and to what he exposes my reputation.”

As she spoke, she moved towards the door, but Monsieur de Nemours detained her, saying : “ Fear nothing, Madame ; no one knows I am here, and no interruption is to be feared. Listen to me, Madame, listen to me, if not from kindness, at least for your own sake, and

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

to avoid the extremes to which I shall inevitably be driven by a love which I can no longer control."

Madame de Clèves gave way for the first time to the feelings she had for Monsieur de Nemours, and, looking at him with eyes full of tenderness and charm, she said: "But what do you expect from the favour you ask of me? You will perhaps regret having obtained it, and I shall certainly regret granting it. You deserve a happier lot than you have had so far, and than you will have in future unless you seek it elsewhere."

"I, Madame", he exclaimed, "seek happiness elsewhere? And is there any other than to be loved by you? Although I have never declared it, I cannot believe, Madame, that you are unaware of my love, and that you do not know it to be the truest and most ardent that will ever be. How it has been tried by things unknown to you, and how you have tried it by your severity!"

"Since you wish me to talk to you, and I consent", replied Madame de Clèves, taking a seat, "I shall do so with a frankness you will not easily find in persons of my sex. I shall not tell you that I have not perceived your love for me—perhaps you would not believe me if I did. I admit, then, not only that I have seen it, but that I saw it as you would have wished it to appear to me."

FOURTH PART

“ And, if you perceived it, Madame ”, he interrupted, “ can it be that you were not affected by it, and dare I ask you whether it made no impression on your heart ? ”

“ You must have judged this by my conduct ”, she replied ; “ but I should like to know what you thought.”

“ I should have to be in a more privileged condition to dare tell you ”, he replied, “ and my lot has too little relation to what I should say. All I can tell you, Madame, is that I have ardently wished you had not told Monsieur de Clèves what you were hiding from me, and that you had hidden from him what you let me see.”

“ How were you able to find out ”, she asked, blushing, “ that I confessed something to Monsieur de Clèves ? ”

“ I learned it from you, Madame ”, he replied ; “ but, to absolve me for my boldness in listening to you, recall whether I took advantage of what I heard, whether my hopes were raised thereby, and whether I showed more boldness in trying to speak to you.”

He began to tell her how he had heard her conversation with Monsieur de Clèves, but she interrupted him before he had finished, saying : “ Do not tell me any more. I see now why you were so well informed ; you seemed to me already too much so at the Dauphiness’, who had heard about the incident from those to whom you had told it.”

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Monsieur de Nemours then told her how this came about.

“ Do not excuse yourself ”, she said. “ I forgave you long ago without having heard the reason from you ; but, since you learned from me what I intended to keep from you all my life, I admit that you awakened feelings in me that were unknown to me before I met you, and of which I knew so little that they caused in me at first a surprise that only accentuated the agitation they always produce. I admit this to you with less shame because my admission comes at a time when it is not a sin, and because you have seen that my conduct has not been dictated by my feelings.”

“ What you have said, Madame ”, exclaimed Monsieur de Nemours, kneeling at her feet, “ overwhelms me with joy and rapture.”

“ I have told you nothing ”, she replied with a smile, “ that you did not already know only too well.”

“ Ah, Madame ”, said he, “ what a difference between finding it out by chance and hearing it from you when I see that you are willing for me to know it ! ”

“ It is true ”, she said, “ that I am willing you should know it, and that I find pleasure in telling you. I am not sure whether I am not telling you more from love of myself than from love of you ; for, after all, this avowal will

FOURTH PART

have no consequences, and I shall observe the strict rules my duty imposes."

" You do not intend to do that, Madame ", replied Monsieur de Nemours. " Duty no longer binds you ; you are free ; and, if I dared, I would even say that it is for you so to act that your duty will some day require you to cherish the feelings you have for me."

" My duty ", she replied, " requires me never to think of anyone, and of you less than anyone in the world, for reasons unknown to you."

" Perhaps they are not, Madame ", he replied, " but they are not real reasons. I have cause to believe that Monsieur de Clèves thought me more fortunate than I was, and that he imagined you had approved the foolish action love made me perform without your consent."

" Let us not speak of that affair ", she said ; " I cannot bear the thought—I am ashamed of it, and the subject is also very painful to me because of its consequences. It is only too true that you caused Monsieur de Clèves' death ; the suspicions your inconsiderate conduct aroused cost him his life, as if you had taken it with your own hand. See what my duty would be if you had both gone to such extremes and the same calamity had happened. I know it is not the same thing in the eyes of the world, but in mine there is no difference,

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

since I know that he came to his death by you and because of me.”

“ Oh, Madame ”, said Monsieur de Nemours, “ what phantom of duty do you oppose to my happiness ! What, Madame ! Shall a vain and baseless belief prevent you from making happy a man whom you do not regard with indifference ! What ! I entertain the hope of passing my life with you : my destiny leads me to love the most estimable woman in the world ; I find in her all that goes to make an adorable Mistress ; she does not regard me with indifference ; and I find in her conduct everything that can be wished for in a wife—for, after all, Madame, you are perhaps the only person in whom these two things were ever found to the same degree as they are in you : all who marry Mistresses who love them tremble when they marry them, and have fears with regard to other men when they remember their wives’ conduct with themselves ; but in you, Madame, nothing is to be feared, and all in you is admirable. Have I looked forward to such great happiness, I say, only to see you put obstacles in the way ? Oh, Madame, you forget that you have distinguished me from all other men ; you were mistaken, and I only flattered myself.”

“ You did not flatter yourself ”, she replied. “ The reasons for my decision would perhaps not seem so strong to me were it not for the

FOURTH PART

distinction you suspect, and that is just what makes me foresee unhappiness if I bind myself to you.”

“ I have no answer ”, he replied, “ when you indicate that you fear unhappiness ; but I confess that after all you have been good enough to say to me, I did not expect to find such a cruel reason.”

“ It is so far from being uncomplimentary to you ”, replied Madame de Clèves, “ that I have even great difficulty in telling it to you.”

“ Alas ! Madame ”, he replied, “ how can you fear to flatter me too much after what you have recently said ? ”

“ I mean to speak further with the same frankness as I have just shown ”, said she, “ and I am going to ignore all the reserve and all the subtleties that I ought to practise during a first interview, but I beg you to listen without interrupting.

“ I believe I owe to your faithfulness the slight reward of not hiding from you any feelings of mine, but of letting you see them just as they are. This will be probably the only time in my life that I shall allow myself to show them to you ; nevertheless, I cannot admit to you without shame that the certainty of being no longer loved by you, as I now am, appears to me such a terrible misfortune that, were there not already insurmountable claims of duty, I doubt whether I could decide to

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

expose myself to such a misfortune. I know you are free ; that I am free ; and that things are such that the public would perhaps have no cause to censure you, or me, if we united ourselves forever. But do men remain in love during these eternal unions ? Ought I to expect a miracle in my favour, and can I put myself in a position to see the inevitable death of the love that would be my sole happiness ? Monsieur de Clèves was perhaps the only man in the world capable of retaining love after marriage. My fate was opposed to my enjoying this happiness ; perhaps, also, his love survived only because he found none in me. But I could not keep yours in that way ; I even imagine that the obstacles account for your constancy. You found enough of them to incite you to win, and my involuntary actions, or things you learned by chance, gave you hope enough for you not to be discouraged."

"Ah, Madame", cried Monsieur de Nemours, "I cannot maintain the silence you imposed on me. You do me too great an injustice, and you show me too plainly how far you are from being prejudiced in my favour."

"I admit", she replied, "that love may lead me, but it cannot blind me ; nothing can prevent my knowing that you were born with a disposition for gallantry and all the qualities likely to bring success therein. You have

FOURTH PART

already had several love-affairs ; you would have others ; I should no longer make you happy ; I should see you become to another woman what you have been to me ; I should be mortally hurt ; and I should not even be sure of not suffering from jealousy. I have told you too much to hide from you that I have already felt it on your account, and that I suffered so cruelly the evening the Queen gave me Madame de Thémines' letter, supposed to have been addressed to you, that an impression remains leading me to believe that jealousy is the greatest of all sufferings.

“Vanity or liking makes all women want to enthrall you ; there are few you do not attract ; my experience leads me to believe that there are none you could not attract. I should always be thinking you were in love and loved, and I should not often be wrong. Yet, in this state of affairs, I should have no choice but to suffer—I do not know whether I should even dare to complain. One reproaches a lover, but can one reproach a husband, when his only fault is that he no longer loves ? Even if I could get used to this kind of suffering, could I get used to thinking I saw Monsieur de Clèves ever accusing you of his death, reproaching me for having loved you, for marrying you, and making me feel the difference between his love and yours ? It is impossible to ignore reasons so strong ; I must

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

stay as I am, and keep my resolution never to change my state."

"Oh, do you think you can, Madame?" cried Monsieur de Nemours. "Do you believe your resolution can hold out against a man who adores you and who is fortunate enough to be loved in return? It is harder than you think, Madame, to resist him who is loved and who loves you. You have done so by an austere virtue that is almost without parallel, but this virtue is no longer opposed to your feelings, and I hope you will be guided by them in spite of yourself."

"I well know that there is nothing more difficult than what I am undertaking", replied Madame de Clèves. "I mistrust my strength in the midst of my reasoning; what I think I owe to the memory of Monsieur de Clèves would be weak were it not upheld by the claims of my own peace; and the claims of my peace need the support of my duty, but, although I mistrust myself, I believe I shall never conquer my scruples, nor do I hope to overcome the affection I have for you. It will make me unhappy, and I shall avoid seeing you, however painful this may be. I entreat you, by all the influence I have over you, not to seek any opportunity of seeing me. I am in a state that makes sinful all that would be permitted at any other time, and propriety alone absolutely forbids our meeting."

FOURTH PART

Monsieur de Nemours threw himself at her feet, and gave way to all the feelings that agitated him. He showed her by his words and by his tears the tenderest passion with which a heart has ever been touched ; Madame de Clèves was not insensible ; and, looking at the Duke with eyes somewhat swollen with tears, she cried :

“ Why is it that I must accuse you of the death of Monsieur de Clèves ? Why did I not meet you for the first time after I was free, or why did I not know you before I was married ? Why does fate separate us with such an insurmountable obstacle ? ”

“ There is no obstacle, Madame ”, replied Monsieur de Nemours ; “ you alone oppose my happiness, and you alone impose on yourself a law that virtue and reason could not impose on you.”

“ It is true ”, she said, “ that I am sacrificing much to a duty that exists only in my imagination. Wait and see what time can do. Monsieur de Clèves has only just died, and this terrible event is too near to allow me to see clearly and distinctly. Enjoy the pleasure of winning the love of a woman who never would have loved had she not met you ; rest assured that the feelings I have for you will be eternal, and that they will remain unchanged whatever I do. Good-bye—this conversation shames me—repeat it to the Vidame ; I consent to this, and beg you to do it.”

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

With these words, she left the room, without Monsieur de Nemours' being able to retain her. She found the Vidame in the next room. He saw she was so agitated that he did not dare speak to her, and accompanied her to her carriage without a word. He went back to find Monsieur de Nemours, who was so filled with joy, sorrow, astonishment, and admiration—in short, with all the feelings that can arise from a love full of fear and hope, that he was beside himself. It took the Vidame a long time to prevail upon him to repeat the conversation. At length he did so, and Monsieur de Chartres, though he was not in love, had no less admiration than had Monsieur de Nemours himself for the virtue, intelligence, and worth of Madame de Clèves. They considered what fate the Duke might hope for ; and the latter, despite the fears that arose from his love, agreed with the Vidame that Madame de Clèves could not possibly carry out all the resolutions she had made. They decided, however, that her commands must be obeyed, lest, if anyone noticed his love for her, she might make declarations and vows before people that she would carry out afterwards for fear of their thinking that she had loved him during her husband's life-time.

Monsieur de Nemours decided to accompany the King. It was a journey he could not well avoid, and he resolved to go without even

FOURTH PART

trying to see Madame de Clèves again from the place whence he had sometimes seen her. He asked the Vidame to speak to her. What did he not say to him to be repeated to her ! What an infinite number of reasons to persuade her to overcome her scruples ! In short, the night was well advanced before Monsieur de Nemours thought of leaving him in peace.

Madame de Clèves also was far from finding peace : it was as novel for her to have abandoned the restraint she had imposed upon herself, to have allowed for the first time in her life some one to say he loved her and to have said of herself that she loved, that she did not recognize herself. She was astonished at what she had done—she regretted it—she was delighted—all her feelings were full of agitation and passion. She considered again the reasons dictated by her duty which were opposed to her happiness. She was grieved to find them so strong, and regretted having stated them so well to Monsieur de Nemours. Although the idea of marrying him had occurred to her mind as soon as she saw him again in the garden, it had not made the same impression on her as the conversation she had just had with him, and there were moments when she had difficulty in feeling that she could be unhappy if she married him. She would have been glad to be able to assure herself that she was mistaken,

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

as regards both her scruples about the past and her fears for the future. Reason and duty dictated, at other moments, ideas quite opposed to these, which brought her quickly to the conclusion not to marry again, and never to see Monsieur de Nemours ; but this was a very cruel resolution to establish in a heart as moved as hers and so recently abandoned to the charms of love. Finally, in order to obtain a little peace, she thought it was not yet necessary to force herself to come to a decision ; etiquette left her considerable time to make up her mind, but she decided to stand firm and have nothing to do with Monsieur de Nemours.

The Vidame came to see her and pleaded the Duke's cause with all imaginable skill and perseverance. He could not make her change regarding her own conduct or what she had imposed on Monsieur de Nemours. She told him her intention was to stay as she was, that she knew this would be difficult, but that she hoped to have the strength. She showed so clearly to what extent she was affected by the opinion that Monsieur de Nemours had caused her husband's death, and how convinced she was that she would be acting contrary to her duty if she married him, that the Vidame feared it would be difficult to dispel this idea. He did not tell the Duke what he thought, and, when he repeated this conversation to him, he gave

FOURTH PART

him all the hope that reason should awaken in a man who is loved.

They left next day, and joined the King. The Vidame wrote to Madame de Clèves, at Monsieur de Nemours' request, to talk to her about the Duke, and in a second letter that followed close upon the first Monsieur de Nemours wrote a few lines with his own hand. But Madame de Clèves, who did not want to act contrary to the rules she had laid down for herself and who feared the accidents that might result from correspondence, informed the Vidame she would not receive further letters from him if he continued to talk of Monsieur de Nemours, and she even requested him not to mention him any more.

The Court accompanied the Queen of Spain as far as Poitou. During this absence Madame de Clèves was left to herself, and the more she was away from Monsieur de Nemours and from all that could remind her of him, the more she recalled the memory of Monsieur de Clèves, which she made it a point of honour to cherish. The reasons she had for not marrying Monsieur de Nemours seemed strong as regards her duty and insurmountable as regards her own peace of mind. The cessation of his love and the tortures of jealousy, which she considered inevitable in marriage, showed her the certain misery into which she was going to throw herself, but she also saw that

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

she was undertaking the impossible in attempting to resist the personal appeals of the most lovable man in the world, whom she loved and who loved her, and that in a manner which clashed neither with virtue nor with propriety.

She concluded that absence and distance could alone give her strength : she found she needed it, not only to carry out her determination to remain free, but even to keep herself from seeing Monsieur de Nemours ; and she decided to go on a journey long enough to occupy all the time that etiquette obliged her to live in retirement. Large estates that she had near the Pyrenees appeared to her the best place that she could choose. She set out a few days before the Court returned ; and, before leaving, she wrote to the Vidame entreating him that no inquiries be made concerning her and that no letters be sent.

Monsieur de Nemours was afflicted by this journey as another would have been by the death of the woman he loved. The thought of being deprived for some time of the sight of Madame de Clèves caused him deep grief, all the more that he had just tasted the pleasure of seeing her and of seeing her touched by his love. All he could do, however, was to grieve ; but his grief increased considerably. Madame de Clèves, whose mind had been so agitated, fell seriously ill as soon as she reached

FOURTH PART

her journey's end. When the news of this reached the Court, Monsieur de Nemours was inconsolable: his grief and despair knew no bounds. The Vidame had great difficulty in preventing him from showing his passion in public; he had equal difficulty in keeping him at home and persuading him not to go himself to obtain news of her. The relationship and friendship of the Vidame served as a pretext to send several couriers. It was learned at last that she was no longer in the extreme danger she had been in, but she remained in a state of languor that left little hope for her life.

This protracted and close view of death made Madame de Clèves see the affairs of this world in a guise quite different from what they appear when in health. The necessity of dying, which she saw close at hand, accustomed her to detaching herself from everything, and the length of time she was ill made this become a habit. When she recovered from this, she found, nevertheless, that Monsieur de Nemours was not effaced from her heart; but she called to her aid to defend herself against him all the reasons she thought she had for never marrying him. A great battle raged in her heart: finally, she overcame the remains of her love, that had been weakened by the reflections during her illness.

The thought of death had brought to her

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

in reproach the memory of Monsieur de Clèves. This remembrance, which harmonized with her duty, made a strong impression on her heart. The passions and ties of the world appeared to her such as they appear to persons who have higher and more detached views. Her health, which remained very poor, helped her to preserve these opinions; but, as she knew what circumstances can do to the wisest resolutions, she did not wish to risk destroying hers, or to return to the place where lived the man she loved. She retired to a convent, on the pretext of needing a change of air, without showing any decided intention of abandoning Court life.

When Monsieur de Nemours first heard of this, he saw the gravity of this retreat, and understood its importance. He inferred at once that he had no longer anything to hope for. The destruction of his hopes did not prevent his trying every means to bring back Madame de Clèves: he had the Queen write, he had the Vidame write to her and go to see her—but all in vain. The Vidame saw her: she did not tell him that she had come to a decision, but he inferred nevertheless that she would never return. Finally Monsieur de Nemours went himself, under the pretext of taking the baths. She was extremely agitated and surprised to hear of his arrival. She sent word to him by a lady of standing, a personal

FOURTH PART

friend who happened to be with her, that she begged him not to consider it strange that she did not expose herself to the danger of seeing him and of destroying by his presence feelings it was her duty to maintain. She would have him know that, having found her duty and her tranquillity were opposed to her inclination to be his, all else in the world seemed to her so unimportant that she had renounced it forever. She thought only of the future life, and no feeling remained for her but the desire to see him in the same state of mind as that in which she was.

Monsieur de Nemours thought he would die of anguish in the presence of the lady who told him this. He begged her a score of times to go back to Madame de Clèves to prevail upon her to let him see her ; but she told him that Madame de Clèves had not only forbidden that any message be brought back from him, but even that any account be given her of the conversation. The Duke had finally to return, as overwhelmed by grief as a man can be when he loses all possible hope of ever seeing again a woman he loved with a passion the most ardent, the most natural, and the best founded that ever was. Nevertheless, he did not yet give up, and he did all he could think of that was likely to make her change her mind. At last, when whole years had passed, time and absence allayed his grief, and extinguished

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

his passion. Madame de Clèves so lived that there was little probability of her ever returning ; she passed part of the year in the convent and the other at home, but in an isolation and in occupations more saintly than those of the most austere convents, and her life, which was brief, left examples of inimitable virtue.

HISTORICAL NOTES

The following is not a complete list of historical characters mentioned in The Princess of Clèves. Names well known in English history have been omitted, as have many minor French names. Notes have been supplied only when they serve to elucidate the text.

The reader will find difficulties if he attempts to establish an exact chronology of the story. Madame de La Fayette deliberately used incidents of earlier or later date than those mentioned in the context if such a change of date suited her purpose. In doing so, she followed the tradition of her day, for it was thus that Corneille used his historical sources.

ALVA (THE DUKE OF) : Ferdinand Alvarez of Toledo ; commanded the Imperial forces opposed to the Duke of Guise at Metz. He was the proxy sent to marry Elizabeth of France for Philip II of Spain.

AMBOISE CONSPIRACY (THE) : The Huguenots and others opposed to the Guises plotted to surprise the Court at Amboise and to seize

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

the King and Queen. The conspiracy was discovered by the Guises, and many of the plotters were executed (1560).

ANET (CHÂTEAU OF) : Built by order of Henry II for Diana of Poitiers and decorated by the most celebrated artists (1552).

ANVILLE (MONSIEUR D') : Celebrated soldier and courtier in the reigns of Henry II, Francis II, and Charles IX.

BLOIS : Came into the possession of the Crown under Louis XII, and was a favourite resort of the Valois. Francis I and Charles IX resided there.

BRISSAC (MARSHAL DE) [1505-63] : Charles I, eldest son of René (first Lord of Brissac). Excellent soldier and clever diplomat. Military career extremely brilliant between 1542-56. Took Havre from the English in 1563. Created Marshal of France in 1550.

CARLOS (DON) [1545-68] : Son of Philip II of Spain. A marriage was arranged between Don Carlos and Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II of France ; but Philip II married her himself. In 1560 Don Carlos was proclaimed heir to the throne, but soon after exiled from Court. In 1562 he was injured by a fall, and it was rumoured that his reason was impaired. His father treated him harshly, for reasons that are not very clear. He tried to escape from Spain, and

HISTORICAL NOTES

the King seems to have believed that his son was plotting against him. In 1568 he was seized and imprisoned. Condemned to death by the Council of State, he died in a mysterious way before the sentence could be executed. It is easy to see how there could grow up a legend of the love of Don Carlos and Elizabeth, leading to a final tragedy. (*See* Elizabeth of France.)

CÂTEAU-CAMBRÉSIS (TREATY OF): April 3rd, 1559, between the plenipotentiaries of Henry II of France on the one hand and, on the other, those of Queen Elizabeth of England and Philip II of Spain. The territorial concessions have no bearing on the story, which mentions the treaty because of the two marriages arranged by it. The first of these was between Philip II of Spain and Elizabeth, daughter of Henry II of France; the second, between Philibert Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, and Marguerite of France, sister of Henry II of France. (*See* Elizabeth of France, and Carlos.)

CATHARINE DE' MEDICI [1529-89]. Wife of Henry II of France, mother of Francis II, Charles IX, and Henry III.

CERCAMP: The preliminary conference leading to the treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis (*which see*) was held at Cercamp in the Pas de Calais (1558). Before a definite treaty

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

could be drawn up, news was received of the death of Mary, Queen of England, and the conference was abandoned.

CHAMBORD : A fine Renaissance château, about nine miles from Blois. It was built by Francis I, but it does not seem to appeal to Madame de La Fayette as a work of art, and, while she takes great pains with the pomp and ceremony of tournaments and marriages, she does not deem it necessary to describe the beauties of Chambord.

CHARLES V [1500-58] : King of Spain (as Charles I), better known by his title of Emperor (Charles V). The unsuccessful candidate at the election was Francis I—hence the enmity between the two Kings. The election of Charles V made him ruler along the Rhine, in the Low Countries, along the Alps, and over the Pyrenees—thus encircling France. When Francis died in 1547, the rivalry between the Kings of France and of Spain was continued by Henry II. The siege of Metz was the outstanding event in this struggle. Charles V abdicated in 1555, leaving the Imperial Crown to his brother Ferdinand ; Spain and her colonies, the Low Countries, and Italy to his son Philip II.

CHARTRES (MADAME DE CLEVES) : As the Princess of Clèves did not exist, it is impossible to

HISTORICAL NOTES

identify her mother as a member of the Chartres family. (*See* Introduction, *and* Chartres [The Vidame of].)

CHARTRES (THE VIDAME OF) [1522-60]: François de Vendôme, soldier and courtier. Catherine de Medici loved him; but he was indifferent. She became his bitter enemy; and it was even suspected that he was poisoned at her order. The source of this part of the episode is Le Laboureur's additions to Castelnau's *Memoirs*. The title 'Vidame' has been left untranslated, since there is no English equivalent for it. It means, literally, Vice-Lord.

CHASTELART. The reference to Chastelart is characteristic of Madame de La Fayette's treatment of her historical sources. Brantôme's crudeness invariably disappears from her borrowings. Here she informs us that Chastelart's love for Mary Stuart caused him to lose his reason, and finally cost him his life. Brantôme boldly states that Chastelart, madly in love with Mary Stuart, hid twice under her bed, was twice discovered, and was finally executed for his audacity.

CLÈVES (THE PRINCE OF): Jacques de Clèves, second son of Francis I of Nevers, died in 1564, unmarried.

CLÈVES (THE PRINCESS OF): *see* Introduction.

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

CONDÉ (THE PRINCE OF) [1530-69]: Louis I de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, fifth son of Charles de Bourbon, Duke of Vendôme, and uncle of Henry IV. He laid the foundations of the success of the Condé family under Henry II, changed over to Calvinism under Francis II, and spent most of the rest of his life fighting against the Crown. He was a bitter opponent of the Guises, took a prominent part in the Amboise Conspiracy, was sentenced to death, but was saved by the early death of Francis II. Condé was a hunchback and weak in body, but witty and courageous.

CONNÉTABLE (THE) [1492-1567]: Anne, Duke of Montmorency, distinguished himself during the wars of Francis I, and was made Connétable in 1538. The equivalent English title would be Lord High Constable, but this is too cumbersome to be repeated frequently, and the translation 'The Constable' used, as Madame de La Fayette uses 'le Connétable', without the name following, risks being ludicrous. We have therefore kept the title in French throughout.

COURTENAY (EDWARD): Earl of Devonshire, Marquis of Exeter. Madame de La Fayette mentions Courtenay, *en passant*, but she had read a fairly long article on him in

HISTORICAL NOTES

Le Laboureur's additions to Castelnau's *Memoirs*: "Of the Sieur de Courtenay, Englishman, loved and sought in marriage by Mary, Queen of England." He was thought, at one time, to be plotting to obtain the hand of Elizabeth, with whom he was in very high favour, and was imprisoned.

DAUPHIN (THE) [1543-60]: Francis married Mary Stuart in 1558, and became King of France (Francis II) in the following year. Mary's uncles, the Guises, held the power because Francis was ill and incapable. He died in December, 1560.

D'ESCARS (JEAN): Favourite of Henry II. The prophecy is mentioned by Brantôme, but for the King only. The details—including the exact description of the horse that is to kill d'Escars—are given by Le Laboureur. Madame de La Fayette suppresses the details.

ELISABETH DE FRANCE (MADAME) [1545-68]: Daughter of Henry II and Catharine de' Medici. Betrothed first to Don Carlos of Spain, eldest son of Philip II. The latter, free to marry again on the death of Mary of England, took Elizabeth for himself. The mention of her fatal beauty is a reference to the legend that she continued to love Don Carlos, and was discovered by Philip II, who had both the lovers put to death. There

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

is no historical foundation for this story.
(*See* Carlos.)

ESTOUTEVILLE : François de Bourbon, Duke of Estouteville (?). As the whole episode appears to be invented by Madame de La Fayette, it is difficult to identify the characters.

FERRARA (THE DUKE OF) : Alphonso II of Este was Henry II's cousin.

FRANCIS I [1494-1547] : Son of Charles, Duke of Angoulême. Married Claude, daughter of Louis XIII, and succeeded his father-in-law in 1515.

FRANCIS II [1543-60] : Son of Henry II and Catherine de Medici. Ascended the throne in 1559.

GUISE (CHEVALIER DE) [1547-62] : François de Lorraine. Became Grand Prior of the Order of Malta, and General of the Galleys. Led an expedition to Rhodes. Accompanied Mary, Queen of Scots, to Scotland in 1561. Madame de La Fayette well knew that death did not interfere with his plan of taking Rhodes. Brantôme states that he died of pleurisy after the battle of Dreux.

GUISE (THE DUKE OF) [1519-63] : François de Lorraine, second Duke of Guise. Sustained the memorable defence of Metz against a large Imperial force (1552). Added to his reputation at the Battle of Renty. Campaigned in Italy in support of the Pope, and

HISTORICAL NOTES

was recalled too late to prevent Saint-Quentin falling into the hands of the enemy. When Francis II (husband of Mary, Queen of Scots) came to the throne, he gave the government into the hands of her uncles, the Guises. At the siege of Orleans the Duke of Guise was killed by a pistol shot fired by a fanatical Huguenot.

GUISES (THE) : The Guises to which reference is made are :

- (1) Guise (The Duke of), and
- (2) Lorraine (Cardinal de)
(which see).

HENRY II [1519-59] : Son of Francis I and Claude de France. Ascended the throne 1547. Waged war against Charles V of Spain and against his successor, Philip II. Proposals of peace were made in 1558, and the Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis signed in April, 1559. Henry II was wounded in a tournament, and died in July, 1559.

LIGNEROLLES (PHILIBERT DE) : According to Brantôme, "one of the gallants of the Court, highly accomplished in arms and in speech, for he was full of knowledge, and had a great and noble courage."

LORRAINE, CARDINAL DE [1524-74] : Charles, second son of Claude of Guise and younger brother of the Duke of Guise. Taken into the confidence of Henry II at the early age of

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

twenty-three. Archbishop of Rheims, then Cardinal. The title Cardinal de Lorraine (cf. Cardinal Newman) has been retained because de Lorraine is the family name. The translation, Cardinal of Lorraine, is, of course, absurd.

LORRAINE (THE DUKE OF) [1543-1608]: Charles III, son of Francis I, Duke of Lorraine, and of Christiana of Denmark. Married Claude, daughter of Henry II (1559).

MADAME. (*See* Elisabeth de France and Marguerite de France.) Madame de La Fayette, when she uses the title 'Madame', refers always to Elisabeth de France, daughter of Henry II. When she mentions Marguerite de France, she uses the title 'Madame, the King's sister.'

MARGUERITE DE FRANCE (MADAME, THE KING'S SISTER) [1525-74]: Daughter of Francis I. Married, in 1559, the Duke of Savoy.

MARTIGUES (MADAME DE): Marie de Beaucaire, daughter of Jean de Puyguillon and known as Mademoiselle de Villemontais. Married Sebastien de Luxembourg, Viscount Martigues, a brilliant soldier.

MARY STUART [1542-87]: Mary, Queen of Scots, daughter of James V of Scotland. Married the Dauphin (later Francis II) in 1558. Madame de La Fayette refers to her by her usual title of the Reine Dauphine

HISTORICAL NOTES

or Madame la Dauphine. We have kept the title Dauphiness throughout. Shortly after her husband's death, she returned to Scotland (1561).

MERCŒUR (THE DUCHESS OF): Jeanne de Savoie. Married Nicholas, Duke of Mercœur.

METZ: Besieged by Charles V in 1552. Defended by the Duke of Guise. The siege lasted over two months, and was finally abandoned by the Imperial troops.

MONTGOMERY (COUNT DE) [c. 1530-74]: Count Gabriel de Montgomery. Captain of the Scotch guard of Henry II. Beheaded May 27, 1574, after the religious wars.

NAVARRE (MARGUERITE, QUEEN OF) [1492-1549]: Marguerite d'Angoulême, sister of Francis I; wife of Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre. Professors Chamard and Rudler have pointed out two curious omissions from *The Princess of Clèves*; the first, quite intelligible, is the contentious subject of the Reformation; the second is the Renaissance. It is indeed curious that, beyond a passing reference, as here, to the fact that "we have stories by Marguerite of Navarre", there is no place in the novel, or in the secondary episodes, for the literary glory of the period.

NAVARRE (KING OF) [1518-62]: Antoine de

THE PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Bourbon. Married Jeanne d'Albret in 1548. His son was Henry IV, King of France.

NEMOURS (THE DUKE OF) [1531-85]: Jacques de Savoie came up to the Court of Francis I at the age of fifteen. He served with distinction in the war against Charles V, and was present at the siege of Metz. He was one of the champions of the tournament in which Henry II was killed. He married Anne d'Este, widow of the Duke of Guise. (*See* Introduction.) Brantôme speaks very highly of his courage, charm, and wit—and credits him with great success with the ladies. Madame de La Fayette has been very kind to him. He was an unscrupulous betrayer of women, broke his pledged word to Françoise de Rohan, seduced her, and abandoned her in her shame. Both Le Laboureur and Brantôme give this side of his character. Madame de La Fayette could not use this information, but a careful reading of the novel shows that Nemours is not so completely idealized as he appears at first sight, and the final impression of him is unfavourable.

NEVERS (THE DUKE OF) [1516-62]: Francis I of Clèves, father of the Prince of Clèves. A brilliant soldier—one of the valiant defenders of Metz, present at the defeat of Saint-Quentin, where he saved a great part

HISTORICAL NOTES

of the French army. It was he who revealed to Francis II the Amboise Conspiracy.

ORANGE (THE PRINCE OF) [1533-84] : William of Nassau, Prince of Orange.

QUEENS (THE) : Catherine de Medici and Mary Stuart.

ROCHFORD (COUNTESS OF) : Lady Rochford, sister-in-law to Katharine Howard's cousin and predecessor Anne Boleyn, was executed at the same time as Katharine Howard. It was Cranmer, however, who denounced Katharine.

SAINT-ANDRÉ (MARSHAL DE) : Jacques d'Albon. This ardent Catholic and enemy of heresy is highly praised by Brantôme for his skill as a soldier, but is also presented as a lover of good cheer and a princely spender. He was killed at the battle of Dreux (1562).

SAINT-QUENTIN : The Spanish and English combined defeated the French forces at Saint-Quentin on July 29th, 1557.

SANCERRE : Jean de Breuil, Count de Sancerre, is mentioned by Brantôme, as also is Estouteville ; but the entire episode appears to be an invention of Madame de La Fayette.

SAVOY (THE DUKE OF) [1528-80] : Emmanuel Philibert. Served with the army of Charles V, and won the battle of Saint-Quentin, 1557.

THE PRINCESS OF CLÈVES

SEVENTEEN PROVINCES (THE) : The Netherlands—now Holland and Belgium—through the Valois House of Burgundy fell into Spanish-Hapsburg hands. A revolt came in 1568 ; the seven Northern Provinces federated in 1579, but were not recognized as independent both of Spain and of the Empire until 1648.

THÉMINES (MADAME DE) : Anne de Puymisson, wife of Jean de Lauzières de Thémire.

TOURNELLES (CHÂTEAU DES) : The Palace of Tournelles had become a royal residence in place of the Hôtel Saint-Paul. The Palace, surrounded by a wall protected by *Tournelles* (Turrets), was situated in the Rue Saint-Antoine, near the Bastille. Catharine de' Medici abandoned the Palace after the tragic death of Henry II, and Charles IX in 1563 ordered it to be demolished. The ruins finally disappeared in Henry IV's time. The present Place des Vosges is on part of the site.

VALENTINOIS (THE DUCHESS OF) : Diane de Poitiers, daughter of Jean de Poitiers, was born in 1499 and died in 1566. She married Louis de Brézé, Count Maulevrier, who died in 1531. She had two daughters by this marriage. One married Robert de la Mark, Duke of Bouillon ; the other, Claude de Lorraine, Duke of Aumale. Every penny

HISTORICAL NOTES

that could be raised from the Duchy of Valentinois, which her royal lover had given her, was spent on the building and beautifying of the Château of Anet. When the King died, she retired there. The incident of asking for the seals before the King's death and the reply of Madame de Valentinois is related in detail by Brantôme (*Dames galantes*, vol. ii, pp. 327-8).

BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

Crown 8vo, 7/6 net ; Demy 8vo (marked *) 12/6 net

FULL LIST

Times Literary Supplement

"That excellent series."

Spectator

"Messrs. Routledge's valuable and important series."

London Mercury

"Messrs. Routledge are putting us deep in their debt with the *Broadway Translations*. We wish this series luck. It is really covering fresh ground."

Daily News

"There are few libraries that will not be the richer for the volumes in this series."

Bookman's Journal

"Messrs. Routledge are to be congratulated upon one of the most delightful literary enterprises that one remembers."

Cassell's Weekly

"The *Broadway Translations* are outstanding examples of what can be produced by scholarly editors finding pleasure in their work and encouraged by publishers of a scholarly mind. Books of fine quality."

Daily Graphic

"This series is in every way remarkable ; the translations are scholarly, the binding is strong and artistic, the general format worthy of a place in any library, and the texts are difficult to obtain in any other edition."

Published by

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.

Broadway House: 68-74 Carter Lane, E.C.4.

BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

TRAVELS OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN

W. ROSE, Ph.D.

With 20 illustrations by Alfred Crowquill and an Introduction on *The Literary History of the Book, Its popularity, and The Author.*

"A glorious liar, Munchausen is one of the immortals; as long as it is human nature to like truth made digestible by a spice of lying his fame and name will flourish. The Baron as we know him is a magnificent example of the gallant adventurers to be met with on all the resounding highways of Eighteenth-Century Europe."—*Morning Post.*

FOUR FRENCH COMEDIES OF THE XVIIIth CENTURY RICHARD ALDINGTON

With 4 portraits, a general Introduction on *French and English Comedy*, and four biographical Prefaces. The plays here translated (for the first time) comprise Regnard's *The Residuary Legatee*, Lesage's *Turcaret or The Financier*, Marivaux's *The Game of Love and Chance*, Destouches' *The Conceited Count*.

"The selection is an excellent one. He has given us a writer of brilliant and witty farce, a moralist, a dealer in delightful fantasy, and a sentimentalist. We are glad to welcome this addition to the excellent Broadway Translations."—*Times Literary Supplement.*

HELIODORUS' AN AETHIOPIAN ROMANCE

THOS. UNDERDOWNE, 1587

Revised and corrected by F. A. Wright, with an Introduction.

"The *Aethiopica* is the oldest and by far the first in excellence of construction and general interest of those Greek stories of love and adventure which have survived through the Middle Ages. Nobody who reads it even to-day will think it inferior in interest to the best kind of modern adventure story. The 'rich colour and romantic vigour' of the translation are not exaggerated, and make this work one of the classics of the language."—*Morning Post.*

THREE PLAYS OF LUNACHARSKI

L. A. MAGNUS, LL.B. & K. WALTER

With a portrait, author's preface, and an Introduction.

"A play rich in fantasy and in splendid visions, it sets one dreaming. It means nothing; it means a thousand things; it has the logic and cohesion of its own strange beauty."—*Times Literary Supplement* on *Vasilisa*.

BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

HEINE'S POEMS, SONGS, AND BALLADS

L. UNTERMEYER

With a portrait and an Introduction on *The Life of Heine and its Relation to his Work*.

Contains a large and very representative selection from *The Book of Songs* and other lyrical works. "The fifty odd English translators of Heine's poems have translated badly almost without exception. Mr Untermeyer, being himself a poet and a Jew, has scored the first real success."—*Challenge*.

THEOCRITUS, BION, AND MOSCHUS

J. H. HALLARD

A complete translation into English verse, with an Introduction on *Greek Bucolic Poetry*.

"With Theocritus we step into an enchanted land, the land of pastoral song, which many are inclined to call artificial, but which all perhaps secretly like. Theocritus stands in a peculiar position, in that he has not only the poet's passion for the country, but a genuine love for his shepherds and goatherds and fishermen considered in themselves."—*Times Literary Supplement*.

THREE TIBETAN MYSTERIES

H. I. WOOLF

With an Introduction *On Tibetan Monasteries and Theatre Production*, by J. Bacot and Illustrations from Native designs by V. Goloubew.

This volume should do much to remove the veil of mystery which has so long enveloped Tibet. The first play is an epic of Charity, the second a fairy tale of Good against Evil, the third a comedy of Tibetan life and manners.

REYNARD THE FOX

WM. CAXTON, 1481

Modernized and edited by W. Swan Stallybrass with a glossarial Index. Introduction by Dr. William Rose on *The Beast Epic*. Appendix: *The Physiologus*, translated by James Carlill, with an Introduction. Profusely illustrated.

BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

*SUETONIUS' HISTORY OF TWELVE CAESARS PHILEMON HOLLAND

Reprinted from the *Editio Princeps* of 1606, with all Holland's annotations, etc., edited by J. H. Freese, M.A., with additional notes and an Introduction.

"If the Bible is the Shakespeare of translation, then Philemon Holland is the ingenious Ben Jonson of a splendid craft," says Charles Whibley. The *Twelve Caesars* is a biographical history of the early Roman Empire. In it we find portraits of the emperors, their wives, their mistresses, their ministers, and their generals, against a background of Court intrigues, civil conflicts, and great frontier-wars.

*ESQUEMELING'S BUCCANEERS OF AMERICA

1684-5.

Complete edition (containing the excessively rare Fourth Part) with facsimiles of all the original engravings, maps, etc., modernized and edited by W. Swan Stallybrass; with an Essay by Andrew Lang.

"This is one of the happiest choices that could have been made in the way of giving old books a new audience. The Dutchman who wrote it is one of our first-hand authorities upon the buccaneering of the Spanish Main, for he was a partaker in some of its most celebrated exploits; and the English into which it was rendered in 1684-5 is fine, round, pure, unhurried, and full of savour."—*Observer*.

*CELESTINA, THE SPANISH BAWD

JAMES MABBE, 1631

Edited by H. Warner Allen with an Introduction on *The Picaresque Novel*.

"Whatever its origin, and whatever may be said against its *dramatis personae* on the score of morality, the story of the love-affair of Calisto and Melibea remains an extraordinarily telling piece of work, blending grim ugly realism with high-flown romance, and both with worldly wisdom, with remarkable effect."—*Birmingham Post*.

*AKSAKOFF'S CHRONICLES OF A RUSSIAN FAMILY

M. BEVERLEY

With an Introduction by Prince Mirsky.

This book is probably unique of its kind in the literature of the world. "The story is as vivid and as interesting as that of any novel, as that of the novels of Russian writers of genius, and it has the additional value of being true." *Maurice Baring*.

* Demy 8vo, 12/6 net.

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, Ltd., Carter Lane, E.C.4.

BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

COUNT LUCANOR, OR THE FIFTY PLEASANT TALES OF PATRONIO JAMES YORK, 1868

With an Introduction by J. B. Trend and Illustrations by L. S. Woods.

Written by Prince Don Juan Manuel, these tales are of the greatest importance in Spanish literature, and their author has been called 'The Spanish Boccacio.' "The tales display a completeness of experience and acuteness of observation, that make them a very mine of worldly wisdom, such as Bacon himself would not have despised."—*H. Warner Allen.*

THREE PLAYS OF PLAUTUS F. A. WRIGHT and H. L. ROGERS

The volume contains an important Introduction (on *Plautus the Man, Plautus the Poet, and the Plautine Theatre*), and *The Slip-Knot* (*Rudens*), by F. A. Wright; *The Crock of Gold* (*Aulularia*) and *The Serviceable Servant* (*Pseudolus*) by H. L. Rogers, rendered into English verse.

*GESTA ROMANORUM Rev. CHARLES SWAN

With an Introduction, and a Preface by Dr. E. A. Baker.

"The present work is the first, and indeed the only, translation into modern English of a book that was for centuries as popular as the *Arabian Nights* or the *Morte d'Arthur* in their heyday. It is interesting, not only as one of the earliest collections of short stories, and as a quarry that has furnished material for great literature from the time of Boccacio and Chaucer to that of Schiller and Rossetti, but also a sort of index to popular taste in literature, and to the standards of morality that held good through many generations."—*Preface.*

*A BOOK OF CHARACTERS

RICHARD ALDINGTON

With an Introduction and Notes.

The volume contains 550 'Characters' by 75 different authors, and is the only comprehensive edition of the great Character-writers. Starting with Theophrastus, the author gives selections from Hall, Overbury, Earle, and the minor English Character-writers; then from Cyrano de Bergerac and the French writers, culminating in a representative collection from La Bruyère.

* Demy 8vo, 12/6 net.

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, Ltd., Carter Lane, E.C.4.

BROADWAY TRANSLATIONS

MME DE LAFAYETTE'S PRINCESS OF CLEVES

Prof. H. ASHTON

With an Introduction on the *Life and Times of Mme. de Lafayette*.

"A masterpiece of charming psychology and exquisite art [which] deserves to be considered as the earliest example of the modern novel."—*Lyton Strachey*.

*LACLOS' DANGEROUS CONNEXIONS (Les Liaisons Dangereuses)

RICHARD ALDINGTON

With an Introduction on *The Origins of the Psychological Novel*.

"A witty, scandalous, and remarkably able novel concerned with the interacting intrigues of a small society of persons, and revealing on every page a most brilliant and concentrated art."—*Lyton Strachey*.

*GRIMMELHAUSEN'S SIMPLICISSIMUS, THE

VAGABOND

ANON

With an Introduction by William Rose, Ph. D.

"The greatest German book of the XVIIth century. It is a story of adventure, of the stormy life of a soldier of fortune in a stormy age; an *Odyssey* of the social and moral life of the century; a book written with abundant realism, a record of things seen and experienced."—*Prof. J. G. Robertson*.

*BANDELLO'S NOVELS

GEOFFREY FENTON,

1567

With an Introduction by Robert Langton Douglas.

The eminent Italian critic regards Bandello as "the first Italian novelist after Boccaccio." "His stories, though frequently licentious, indicate a great advance upon his forerunner in the power of depicting character and in seriousness of tone."—*Dr. Richard Garnett*.

THE POETS OF THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY

F. A. WRIGHT

This is a companion volume to the same author's *Girdle of Aphrodite*. It contains all the poems of the Palatine Anthology worthy of preservation and not contained in *The Girdle*, translated into English verse; with full biographies and critical notices of each poet.

* Demy 8vo, 12/6 net.

